ALL-NEW FIRST ISSUE!
E-man
COMICO
E-MAN 1
$2.75 U.S. $3.30 CAN.

E-man™

This story is dedicated to the memory of Salvador Dali and all the other dead surrealists.

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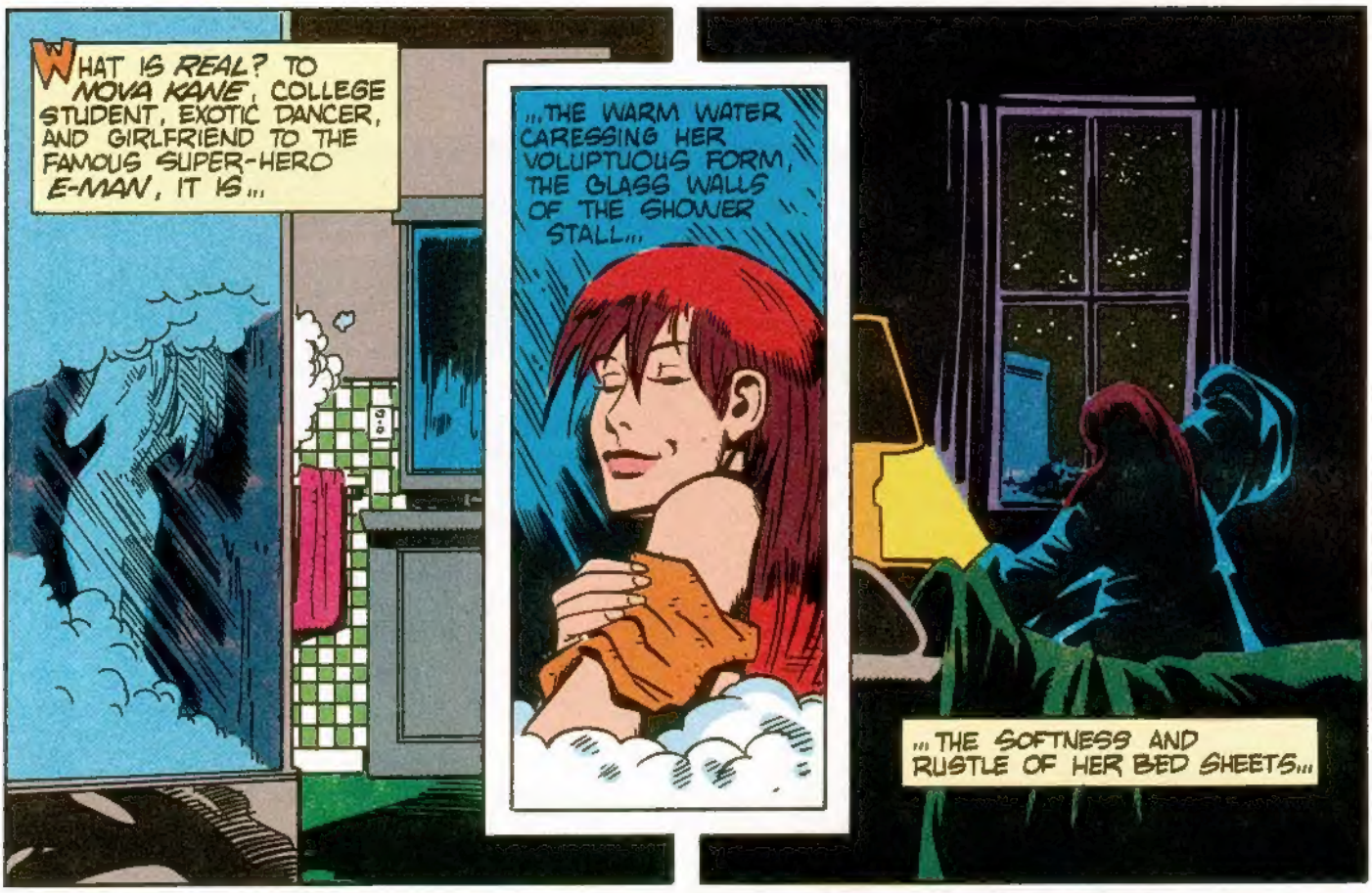
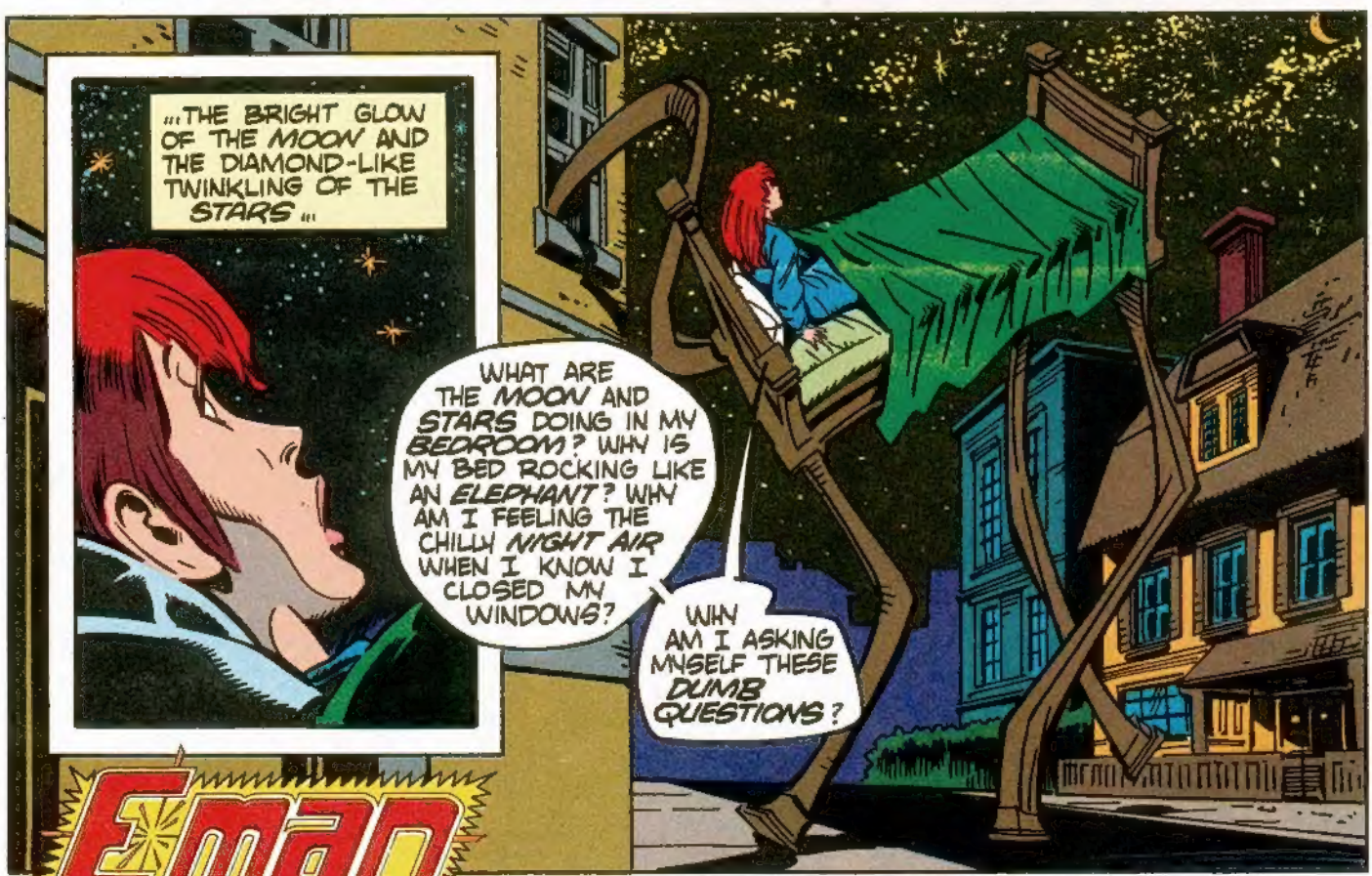
Staton

THE STORY OF E·MAN, NOVA, & VAMFIRE
ALL THREE ENERGY BEINGS HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO ANY FORM OF ENERGY OR MATTER.
E-MAN WAS CREATED WHEN A STAR ERUPTED AND EXPELLED A BUNDLE OF ENERGY WHICH EVENTUALLY TRAVELLED TO EARTH...
...WHERE HE MET NOVA KANE. NOVA'S BODY WAS BLOWN TO ATOMS DURING AN ADVENTURE, BUT SHE WAS ABLE TO RECONSTRUCT HERSELF AND DEVELOPED THE SAME ABILITIES AS E-MAN. SHE EVENTUALLY LOST HER POWERS, DUE TO AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE PASKO SYNDROME.
VAMFIRE WAS BORN IN THE SAME STAR ERUPTION AS E-MAN, BUT, UNLIKE HER BROTHER, SHE BECAME A NEGATIVE FORCE WHO ABSORBS ENERGY INSTEAD OF RADIATING IT.


WHAT IS REAL? TO NOVA KANE, COLLEGE STUDENT, EXOTIC DANCER, AND GIRLFRIEND TO THE FAMOUS SUPER-HERO E-MAN, IT IS...
...THE WARM WATER CARESSING HER VOLUPTUOUS FORM, THE GLASS WALLS OF THE SHOWER STALL...
...THE SOFTNESS AND RUSTLE OF HER BED SHEETS...

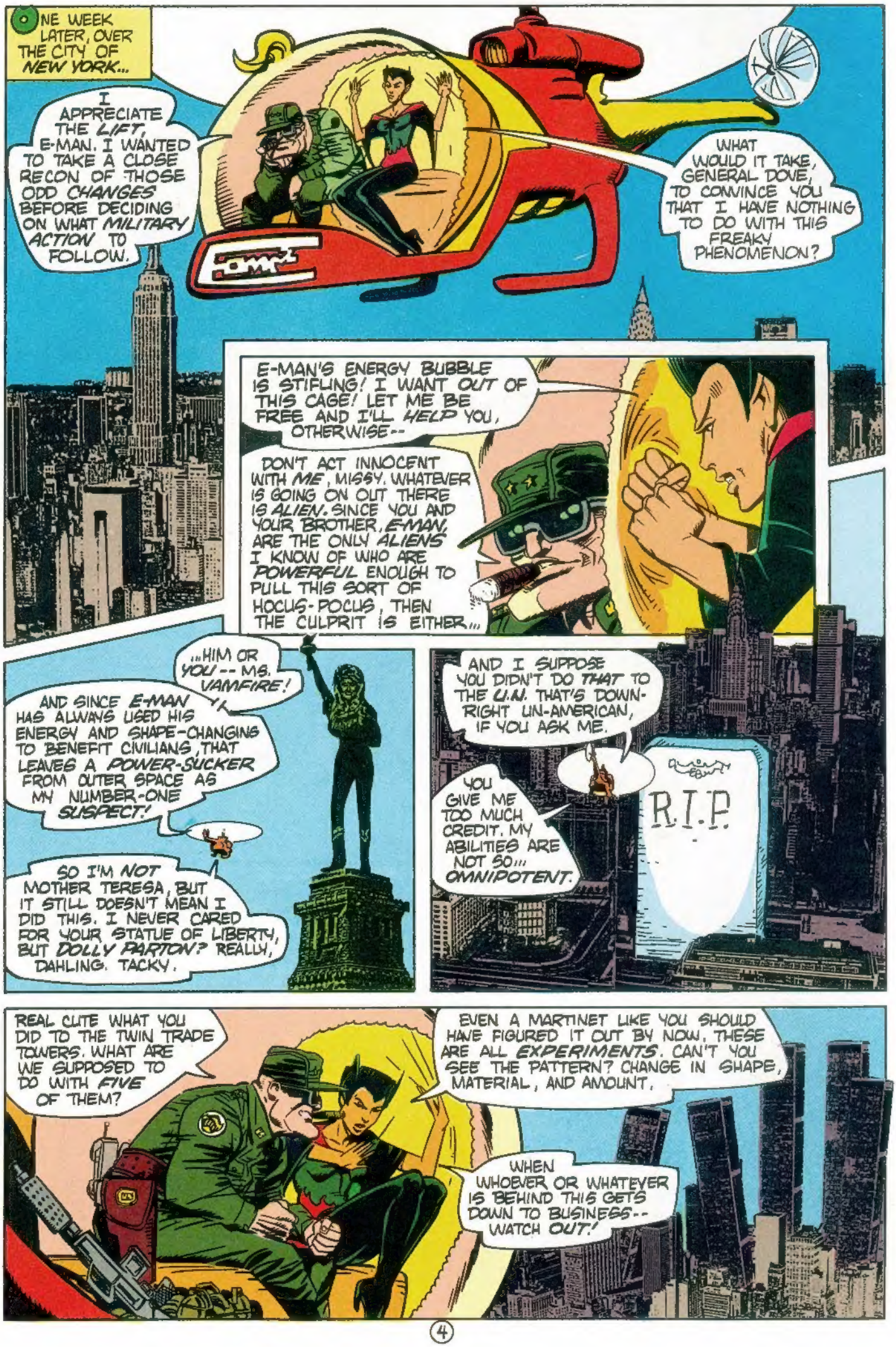

...THE BRIGHT GLOW OF THE MOON AND THE DIAMOND-LIKE TWINKLING OF THE STARS...
WHAT ARE THE MOON AND STARS DOING IN MY BEDROOM? WHY IS MY BED ROCKING LIKE AN ELEPHANT? WHY AM I FEELING THE CHILLY NIGHT AIR WHEN I KNOW I CLOSED MY WINDOWS?
WHY AM I ASKING MYSELF THESE DUMB QUESTIONS?

E-man™ QUARK and the REAL WORLD

NICOLA CUTI * writer / JOE STATON * artist & letterer / RICK TAYLOR * colorist / MICHAEL EURY * editor

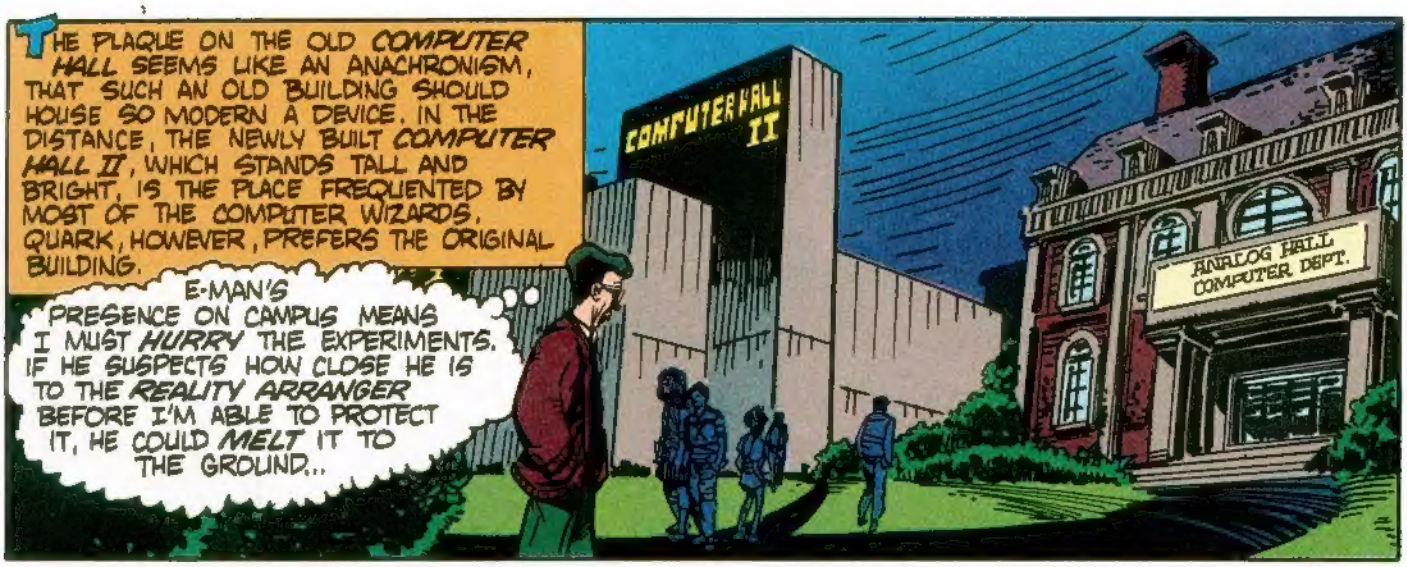
co-creators

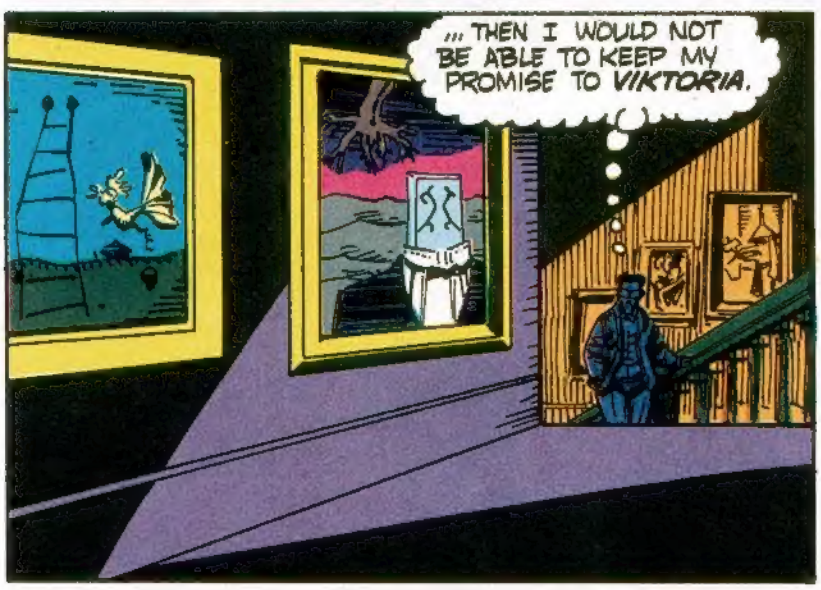
THERE, YOU SEE, NOVA--NO NEED TO PANIC. A SIMPLE EXPLANATION. YOUR BED HAS GROWN LEGS AND IS TAKING A STROLL THROUGH SUBURBIA.
IS THIS YOU, MY DEAR E-MAN? ARE YOU PLAYING SOME SORT OF GAG ON YOUR DEVOTED FRIEND? IF THIS BED IS YOU, THEN I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS!
NOW, I KNOW IT MUST BE YOU PULLING THIS LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND* BIT, BECAUSE WE'RE HEADING TOWARD OUR UNIVERSITY.
NOW, YOU'D BETTER HAVE A PRETTY GOOD REASON FOR THIS, BECAUSE I'M REALLY BURNED UP!
HEEEEYEEE!
XANADU UNIVERSI
* A very early comic strip, circa 1906, by WINSOR McCAY. --ME
SPLASH!
AH, YES. WHAT IS REAL? TO NOVA, REAL IS THE ICY WETN OF T
OH, SHUT UP!
SO, MY LITTLE BUTTERCUP, WE MAY LABEL THIS TEST A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!
BE CAREFUL, ALBERT. HER BOYFRIEND, E-MAN, IS AN EXTREMELY POWERFUL FORCE. HE'S DEADLY!


ONE WEEK LATER, OVER THE CITY OF NEW YORK...
I APPRECIATE THE LIFT, E-MAN. I WANTED TO TAKE A CLOSE RECON OF THOSE ODD CHANGES BEFORE DECIDING ON WHAT MILITARY ACTION TO FOLLOW.
WHAT WOULD IT TAKE, GENERAL DOVE, TO CONVINCE YOU THAT I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS FREAKY PHENOMENON?
E-MAN'S ENERGY BUBBLE IS STIFLING! I WANT OUT OF THIS CAGE! LET ME BE FREE AND I'LL HELP YOU, OTHERWISE--
DON'T ACT INNOCENT WITH ME, MISSY. WHATEVER IS GOING ON OUT THERE IS ALIEN. SINCE YOU AND YOUR BROTHER, E-MAN, ARE THE ONLY ALIENS I KNOW OF WHO ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO PULL THIS SORT OF HOCUS-POCUS, THEN THE CULPRIT IS EITHER...
...HIM OR YOU -- MS. VAMFIRE!
AND SINCE E-MAN HAS ALWAYS USED HIS ENERGY AND SHAPE-CHANGING TO BENEFIT CIVILIANS, THAT LEAVES A POWER-SUCKER FROM OUTER SPACE AS MY NUMBER-ONE SUSPECT!
SO I'M NOT MOTHER TERESA, BUT IT STILL DOESN'T MEAN I DID THIS. I NEVER CARED FOR YOUR STATUE OF LIBERTY, BUT DOLLY PARTON? REALLY, DAHLING. TACKY.
AND I SUPPOSE YOU DIDN'T DO THAT TO THE U.N. THAT'S DOWN-RIGHT UN-AMERICAN, IF YOU ASK ME.
YOU GIVE ME TOO MUCH CREDIT. MY ABILITIES ARE NOT SO... OMNIPOTENT.
R.I.P.
REAL CUTE WHAT YOU DID TO THE TWIN TRADE TOWERS. WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH FIVE OF THEM?
EVEN A MARTINET LIKE YOU SHOULD HAVE FIGURED IT OUT BY NOW. THESE ARE ALL EXPERIMENTS. CAN'T YOU SEE THE PATTERN? CHANGE IN SHAPE, MATERIAL, AND AMOUNT.
WHEN WHOEVER OR WHATEVER IS BEHIND THIS GETS DOWN TO BUSINESS-- WATCH OUT!

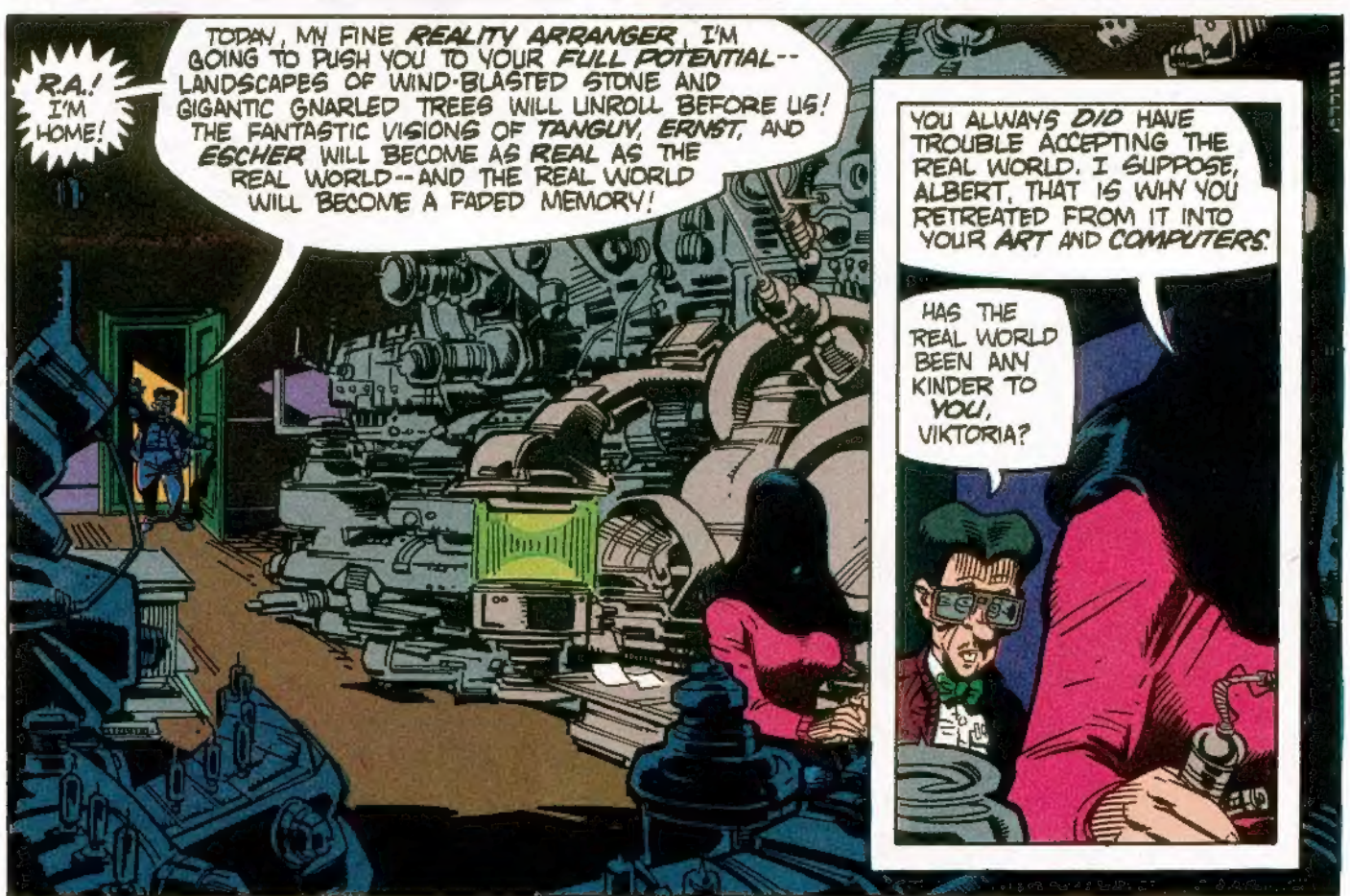
E-MAN, TAKE US DOWN TO CENTRAL PARK. IT'S A PERFECT LOCALE FOR SETTING UP A BASE OF OPERATIONS WHERE I CAN RALLY THE TROOPS, PLENTY OF ROOM AND PLENTY OF COVER.
ROGER, MON GENERAL.
IF YOU ARE THROUGH WITH ME FOR NOW, I THINK I'LL FLY ON OVER TO XANADU U. NOVA HAS BEEN TRYING TO FILL ME IN ON SOMETHING ABOUT A "WALKING BED" AND "SLUMBERLAND."
GO AHEAD, SON. SOUNDS LIKE HER PROBLEM MAY BE RELATED TO OURS.
EITHER IT IS, OR THAT BIMBO'S FINALLY POPPED HER STRAWBERRY WIG... OR IS IT FLIPPED HER STRAWBERRY CORK?
WELL, I'LL BE AN EARRING-TOTING PUNK ROCKER. THAT ENERGY WASN'T CONFINING YOU AT ALL. YOU WERE JUST PRETENDING!
VRROOOOOM
A NEGATIVE FORCE CANCELS OUT A POSITIVE FORCE--BUT ENOUGH OF THE PHYSICS LESSON, DAHLING.
NOW THAT E-MAN ISN'T AROUND TO PROTECT YOU, I WOULD APPRECIATE AN APOLOGY FOR THE "POWER-SUCKER," SLUR, OR I JUST MIGHT DRAIN YOU SO DRY YOU'LL BE SALUTING PRIVATES!
I THINK IT MAY BE WHITE-FLAG TIME, MISSY, 'CAUSE IT APPEARS AS IF YOUR WHOEVER/ WHATEVER FINALLY GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS!
LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THOSE SOO-REAL PAINTINGS YOU FIND HANGING IN THE GOOGIE-HAM ON EAST 88th STREET. WHAT'S IT DOING HERE?
PERHAPS SALVADOR DALI HAS BEEN ELECTED PARK COMMISSIONER.

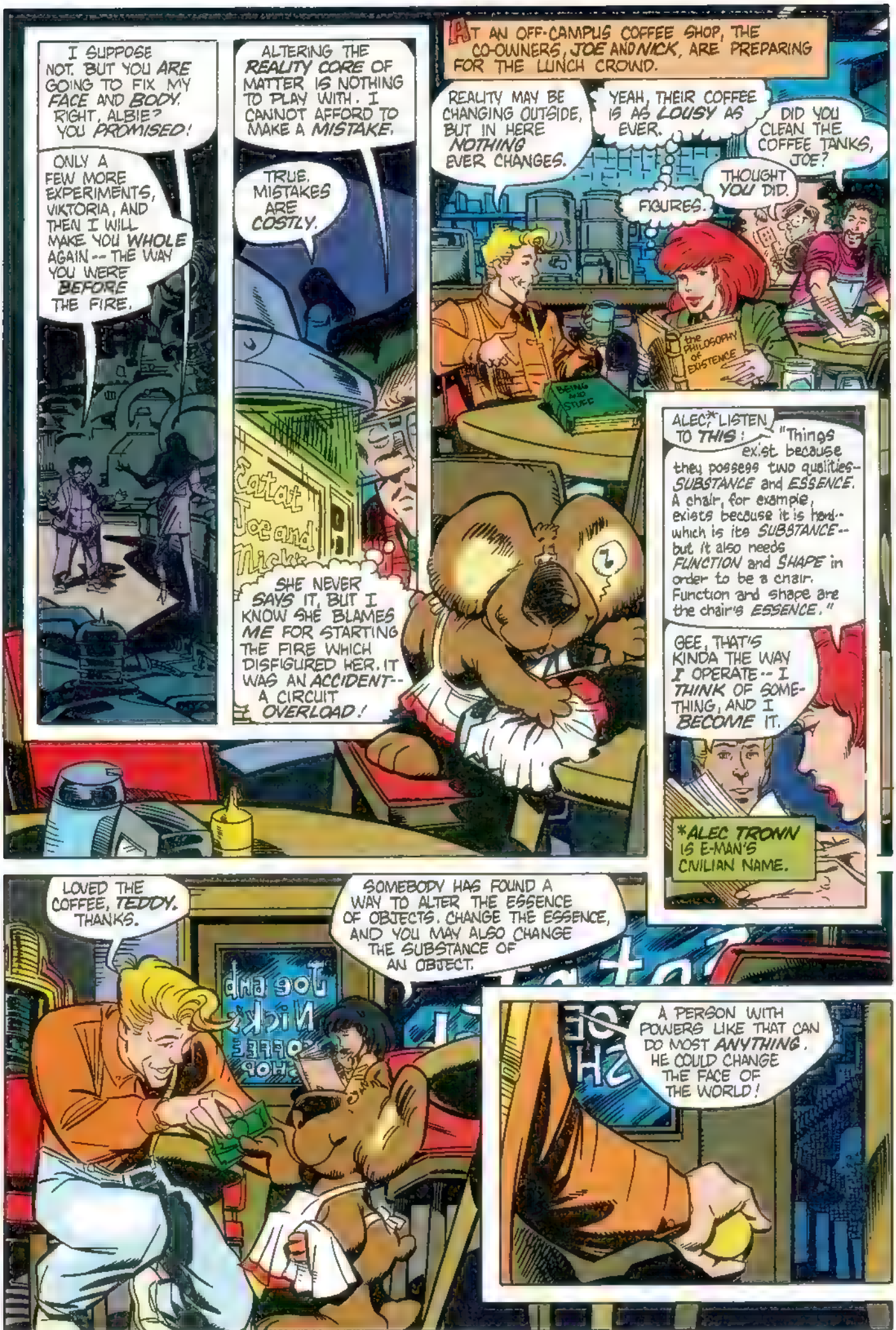
AT THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM'S FAMED FIFTH FLOOR, WHERE THE SURREALISM EXHIBITION IS ON DISPLAY, NOVA KANE SEARCHES FOR A CLUE TOWARD THE INTERPRETATION OF HER BIZARRE NIGHTMARE.
I'VE BEEN THROUGH ALMOST EVERY PAINTING AND SKETCH IN THIS EXHIBIT, BUT THERE'S NO WINSOR McCAY. WELL, HE WAS ACTUALLY A CARTOONIST, SO I SUPPOSE THIS REALLY WAS A LONG SHOT. MAYBE THE LIBRARY AT XANADU U WOULD HAVE SOMETHING ON HIS "SLUMBERLAND" STRIP.
OH, JEEZ! I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET E-MAN AT XANADU!
NOVA! WHAT A SURPRISE. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A FAN OF SURREALISM.
HELLO, ALBERT. PLEASE DON'T THINK ME RUDE, BUT I HAVE AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT WITH MY BOYFRIEND AT XANADU...
LET ME GIVE YOU A LIFT, NOVA. MY CAR IS RIGHT OUTSIDE. IT'S BETTER THAN THE YUCKY SUBWAY.
THANKS. YOU'RE RIGHT.
AT XANADU UNIVERSITY...
I HAVE SEVERAL VERY NICE BOOKS AND PRINTS OF FANTASTIC ART IN MY ROOM. PERHAPS I COULD SHOW THEM TO YOU SOMETIME. IN FACT, IF YOU HAVE SOME TIME RIGHT NOW...
YOU'RE FORGETTING MY APPOINTMENT, ALBERT...
...BUT I WONDER-- DO YOU HAVE ANY BOOKS ON WINSOR McCAY?
McCAY?! UH... NO, I... DON'T THINK SO. WHY DO YOU ASK? DID YOU HAVE A DREAM? THAT IS, UH...
AH, HERE HE IS NOW.
NICE OF YOU TO DROP BY, E-MAN. I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET A FRIEND OF MINE. THIS IS ALBERT QUARK.
I BELIEVE I'M SCARING HIM AWAY, NOVA. SOMETIMES I'M A LITTLE TOO DRAMATIC FOR MY OWN GOOD. SORRY.
THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR US TO MEET, E-MAN... BUT SOON!


THE PLAQUE ON THE OLD COMPUTER HALL SEEMS LIKE AN ANACHRONISM, THAT SUCH AN OLD BUILDING SHOULD HOUSE SO MODERN A DEVICE. IN THE DISTANCE, THE NEWLY BUILT COMPUTER HALL II, WHICH STANDS TALL AND BRIGHT, IS THE PLACE FREQUENTED BY MOST OF THE COMPUTER WIZARDS. QUARK, HOWEVER, PREFERS THE ORIGINAL BUILDING.
E-MAN'S PRESENCE ON CAMPUS MEANS I MUST HURRY THE EXPERIMENTS. IF HE SUSPECTS HOW CLOSE HE IS TO THE REALITY ARRANGER BEFORE I'M ABLE TO PROTECT IT, HE COULD MELT IT TO THE GROUND...
COMPUTER HALL II
ANALOG HALL COMPUTER DEPT.


... THEN I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP MY PROMISE TO VIKTORIA.

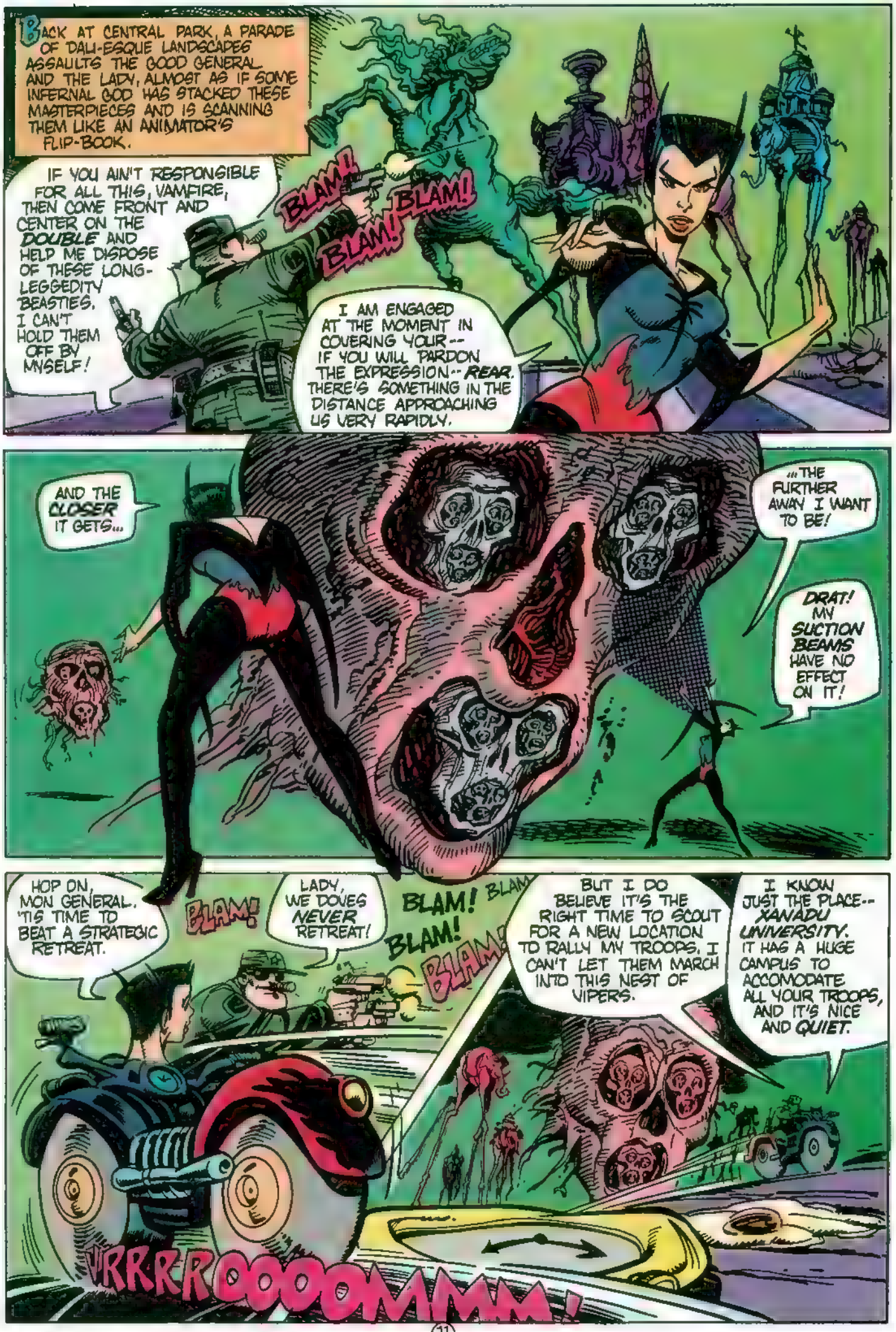
MY POOR SISTER... I SHOULD NOT HAVE RAISED HER HOPES UNTIL I WAS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN ABOUT R.A.'S POTENCY.

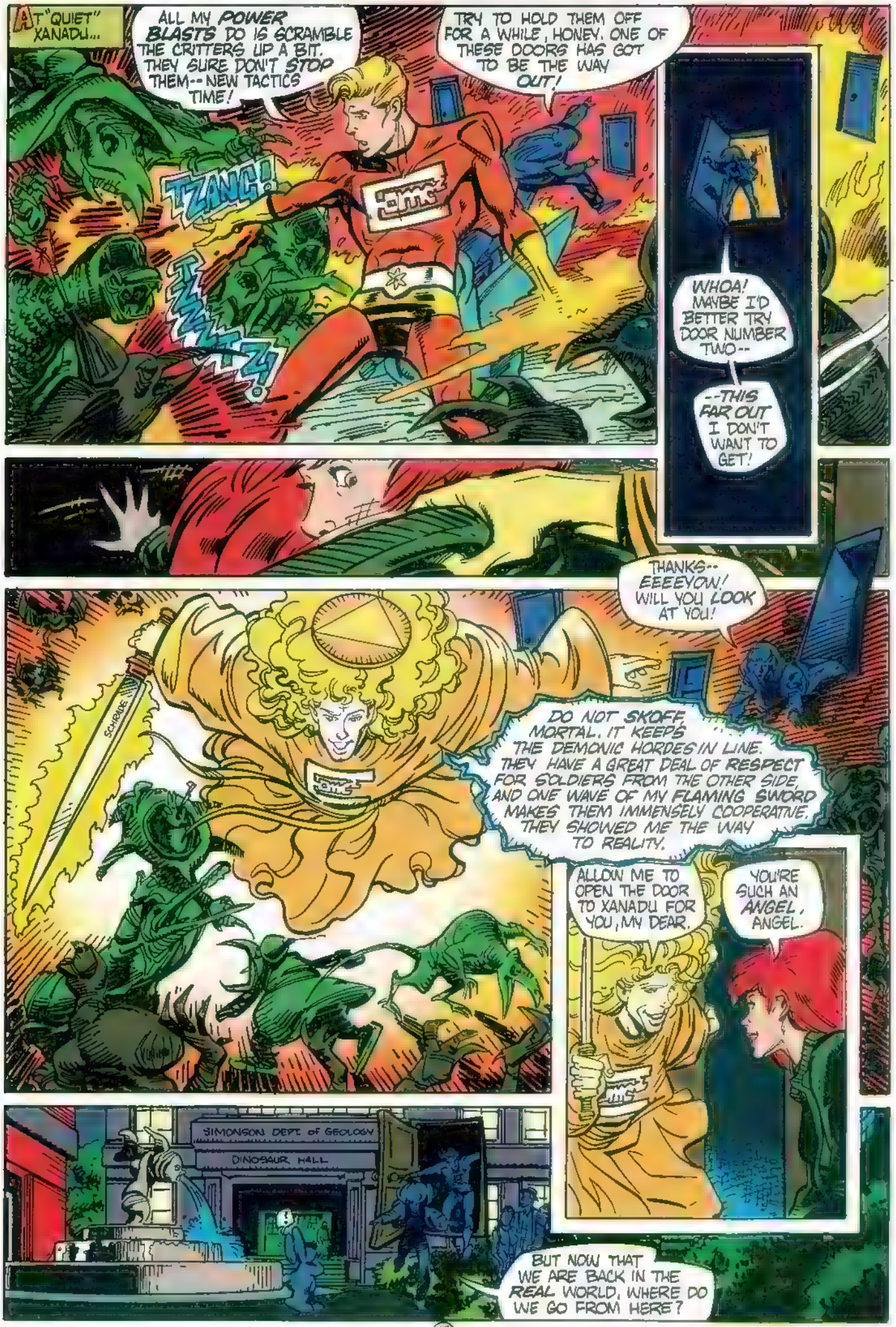

R.A.! I'M HOME!
TODAY, MY FINE REALITY ARRANGER, I'M GOING TO PUSH YOU TO YOUR FULL POTENTIAL-- LANDSCAPES OF WIND-BLASTED STONE AND GIGANTIC GNARLED TREES WILL UNROLL BEFORE US! THE FANTASTIC VISIONS OF TANGUY, ERNST, AND ESCHER WILL BECOME AS REAL AS THE REAL WORLD--AND THE REAL WORLD WILL BECOME A FADED MEMORY!
YOU ALWAYS DID HAVE TROUBLE ACCEPTING THE REAL WORLD. I SUPPOSE, ALBERT, THAT IS WHY YOU RETREATED FROM IT INTO YOUR ART AND COMPUTERS.
HAS THE REAL WORLD BEEN ANY KINDER TO YOU, VIKTORIA?


I SUPPOSE NOT. BUT YOU ARE GOING TO FIX MY FACE AND BODY. RIGHT, ALBIE? YOU PROMISED!
ONLY A FEW MORE EXPERIMENTS, VIKTORIA, AND THEN I WILL MAKE YOU WHOLE AGAIN -- THE WAY YOU WERE BEFORE THE FIRE.
ALTERING THE REALITY CORE OF MATTER IS NOTHING TO PLAY WITH. I CANNOT AFFORD TO MAKE A MISTAKE.
TRUE. MISTAKES ARE COSTLY.
SHE NEVER SAYS IT, BUT I KNOW SHE BLAMES ME FOR STARTING THE FIRE WHICH DISFIGURED HER. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT-- A CIRCUIT OVERLOAD!
AT AN OFF-CAMPUS COFFEE SHOP, THE CO-OWNERS, JOE AND NICK, ARE PREPARING FOR THE LUNCH CROWD.
REALITY MAY BE CHANGING OUTSIDE, BUT IN HERE NOTHING EVER CHANGES.
YEAH, THEIR COFFEE IS AS LOUSY AS EVER.
DID YOU CLEAN THE COFFEE TANKS, JOE?
THOUGHT YOU DID.
FIGURES.
the PHILOSOPHY of EXISTENCE
BEING AND STUFF
ALEC,* LISTEN TO THIS: "Things exist because they possess two qualities-- SUBSTANCE and ESSENCE. A chair, for example, exists because it is hard-- which is its SUBSTANCE-- but it also needs FUNCTION and SHAPE in order to be a chair. Function and shape are the chair's ESSENCE."
GEE, THAT'S KINDA THE WAY I OPERATE -- I THINK OF SOMETHING, AND I BECOME IT.
*ALEC TROWN IS E-MAN'S CNILIAN NAME.
LOVED THE COFFEE, TEDDY. THANKS.
SOMEBODY HAS FOUND A WAY TO ALTER THE ESSENCE OF OBJECTS. CHANGE THE ESSENCE, AND YOU MAY ALSO CHANGE THE SUBSTANCE OF AN OBJECT.
A PERSON WITH POWERS LIKE THAT CAN DO MOST ANYTHING. HE COULD CHANGE THE FACE OF THE WORLD!

UH-OH! TOTO, I DON'T THINK WE'RE IN KANSAS ANYMORE.
WATCH YOUR STEP, 'CAUSE WE CAN'T GO BACK.
STRANGE AS THIS PLACE IS, I CAN'T HELP FEELING I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE.
I RECOGNIZE WHERE WE ARE-- DO YOU REMEMBER THAT LITHOGRAPH I BOUGHT YOU FOR YOUR BIRTH-DAY LAST YEAR?
YES, IT WAS THE HOUSE OF STAIRS BY M.C. ESCHER! THIS IS THE PLACE! BUT THERE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE LIZARDS CLIMBING THE STAIRS.
I HAD TO MENTION LIZARDS!
RUN, NOVA! I'LL HOLD THEM OFF!
CARREECH!
THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM!
THIS WAY, E-MAN! I CAN SEE A DIFFERENT WORLD AHEAD!
ZZNIRTZ!
IZZZANG!

MORE STAIRS!
BUT AT LEAST THESE STAIRS END IN DOORS. ONE OF THE DOORS MAY LEAD OUT!
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF ONE OF THESE DOORS LED TO WONDERLAND.
WHATEVER IS BEHIND THERE CAN'T BE WORSE THAN ESCHERLAND. LET'S GO!
SSSSTTZZSS!
TZANG!
WOULD YOU CONSIDER HIERONYMOUS BOSCH'S VERSION OF HELL WORSE?
I GUESS I WON'T GET TO SEE THE WHITE RABBIT. HUH?


BACK AT CENTRAL PARK, A PARADE OF DALI-ESQUE LANDSCAPES ASSAULTS THE GOOD GENERAL AND THE LADY, ALMOST AS IF SOME INFERNAL GOD HAS STACKED THESE MASTERPIECES AND IS SCANNING THEM LIKE AN ANIMATOR'S FLIP-BOOK.
IF YOU AIN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS, VAMFIRE, THEN COME FRONT AND CENTER ON THE DOUBLE AND HELP ME DISPOSE OF THESE LONG-LEGGEDITY BEASTIES. I CAN'T HOLD THEM OFF BY MYSELF!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
I AM ENGAGED AT THE MOMENT IN COVERING YOUR-- IF YOU WILL PARDON THE EXPRESSION-- REAR. THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE DISTANCE APPROACHING US VERY RAPIDLY.
AND THE CLOSER IT GETS...
...THE FURTHER AWAY I WANT TO BE!
DRAT! MY SUCTION BEAMS HAVE NO EFFECT ON IT!
HOP ON, MON GENERAL. 'TIS TIME TO BEAT A STRATEGIC RETREAT.
BLAM!
LADY, WE DOVES NEVER RETREAT!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BUT I DO BELIEVE IT'S THE RIGHT TIME TO SCOUT FOR A NEW LOCATION TO RALLY MY TROOPS. I CAN'T LET THEM MARCH INTO THIS NEST OF VIPERS.
I KNOW JUST THE PLACE-- XANADU UNIVERSITY. IT HAS A HUGE CAMPUS TO ACCOMODATE ALL YOUR TROOPS, AND IT'S NICE AND QUIET.
VRRRROOOOMMMM!


AT "QUIET" XANADU...
ALL MY POWER BLASTS DO IS SCRAMBLE THE CRITTERS UP A BIT. THEY SURE DON'T STOP THEM-- NEW TACTICS TIME!
TRY TO HOLD THEM OFF FOR A WHILE, HONEY. ONE OF THESE DOORS HAS GOT TO BE THE WAY OUT!
TZANG!
IZZZZZZ!
WHOA! MAYBE I'D BETTER TRY DOOR NUMBER TWO--
--THIS FAR OUT I DON'T WANT TO GET!
THANKS-- EEEEYOW! WILL YOU LOOK AT YOU!
SCHRADE
DO NOT SKOFF, MORTAL. IT KEEPS THE DEMONIC HORDES IN LINE. THEY HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT FOR SOLDIERS FROM THE OTHER SIDE, AND ONE WAVE OF MY FLAMING SWORD MAKES THEM IMMENSELY COOPERATIVE. THEY SHOWED ME THE WAY TO REALITY.
ALLOW ME TO OPEN THE DOOR TO XANADU FOR YOU, MY DEAR.
YOU'RE SUCH AN ANGEL, ANGEL.
SIMONSON DEPT OF GEOLOGY
DINOSAUR HALL
BUT NOW THAT WE ARE BACK IN THE REAL WORLD, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

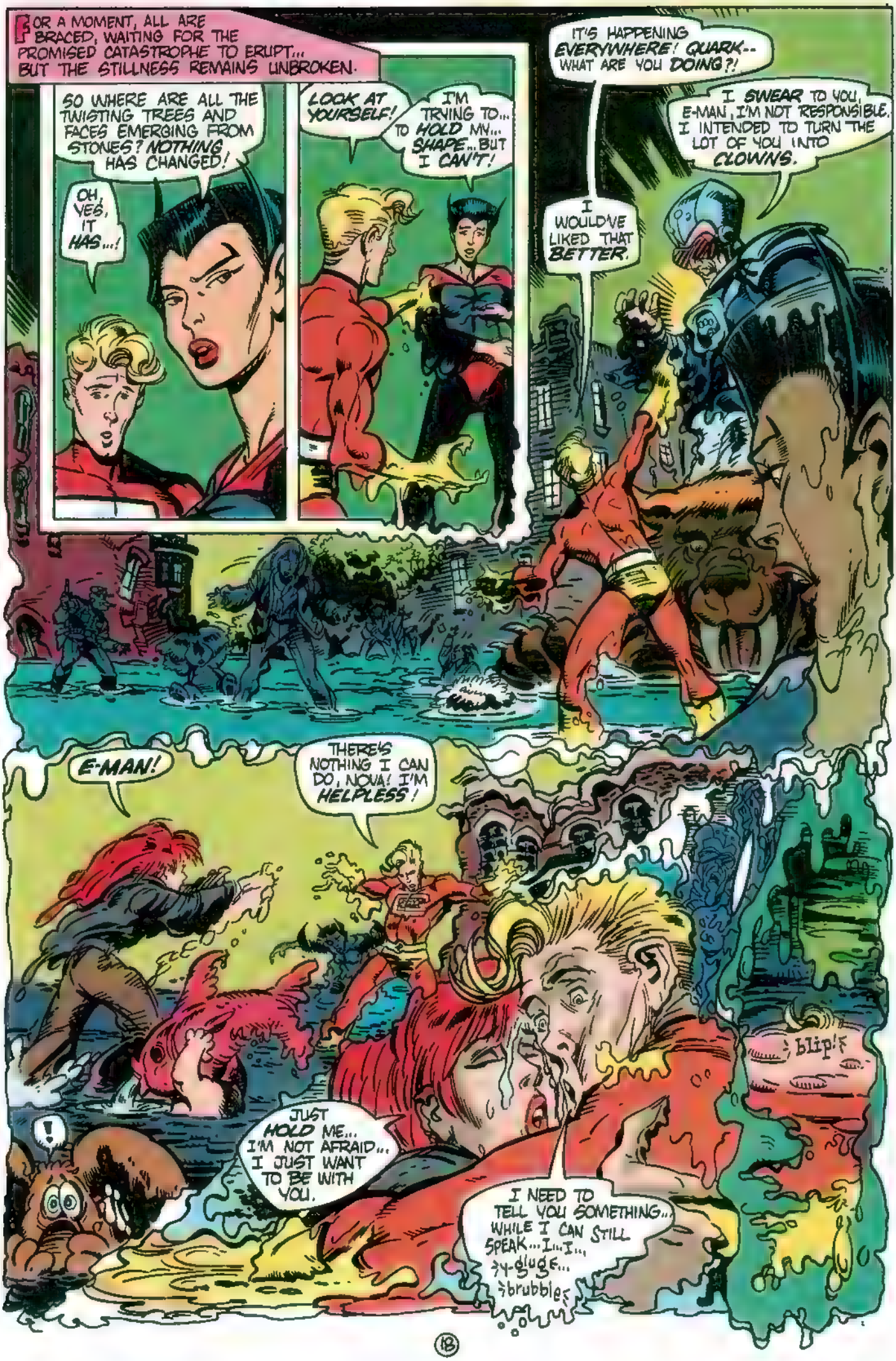
IT'S TOO SOON. I'VE LOST CONTROL OF THE REALITY CORE BEFORE I INTENDED TO, AND THE SURREAL WORLD HAS SLIPPED AWAY. SOMETHING IS RESISTING MY COMMANDS--BUT WHAT?
PLEASE, ALBIE, DON'T FORGET YOUR PROMISE TO ME.
VIKTORIA IS RIGHT. I SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON MY ORIGINAL INTENTION--ALTERING LIVING THINGS! I MUST FOCUS ON ONE ALTERATION AT A TIME.
AH, VIKTORIA, YOU WERE SO BEAUTIFUL. YOU WERE EVEN MORE STUNNING THAN THE MODELS IN OUR ART CLASSES, SO I SUPPOSE IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY ASK YOU TO POSE...
...WHAT A HORRENDOUS MISTAKE THAT WAS
IN OUR ART CLASS, YOU ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE FOOTBALL TEAM, PRESIDENT OF OMEGA PSI, MR. 'LOVE-'EM-AND-LEAVE-'EM'--THADDEUS PAL!
HE WORKED FAST, AND WITHIN A WEEK YOU WERE BOTH QUITE AN ITEM AROUND CAMPUS. YOU HONESTLY BELIEVED HE LOVED YOU, AND HAVING A BROTHER WHO WAS A COMPUTER WIZ...
"...HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS PASSION FOR YOU."
BUT, ALBIE, THAD WOULD DO BETTER IF HE HAD THE TIME. ALL OF HIS ACTIVITIES PREVENT HIM FROM GETTING HIGH GRADES. HE SWORE TO ME THAT IF YOU WOULD USE R.A. TO CHANGE HIS GRADES--
NO! IF ADONIS WANTS HIGHER MARKS, LET HIM EARN THEM, INSTEAD OF USING HIS CHISELED FEATURES TO CHARM YOU INTO GETTING THEM FOR HIM.

I HAVE TO BUY ANOTHER BREADBOARD AT THE EGGHEAD SHOP. DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING WHILE I'M GONE.
WE'LL TALK SOME MORE WHEN I GET BACK, VIKTORIA. YOU'LL SEE I'M RIGHT.
YES, ALBIE.
THOUGHT MY REFUSAL TO HELP THADDEUS HAD ENDED THE MATTER, BUT I HAD MISJUDGED HIS SVENGALI-ISH HOLD OVER YOU."
PLEASE BE CAREFUL, THADDIE. ALBERT HAS A LOT OF PERIPHERAL DEVICES HOOKED UP TO R.A. I'M NOT SURE ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO DO.
ALL I GOTTA DO, BABE, IS BREAK INTO THE FILES AND GIVE MYSELF A 3.6 AVERAGE. THAT'LL BE A CINCH.
OMIGOD! THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED!
WE'VE GOT TO PUT IT OUT! THAD, FIND AN EXTINGUISHER!
HE BOOBY-TRAPPED IT--YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT! NO TELLING WHAT'S GOING TO BLOW UP NEXT. GOTTA GET AWAY FROM HERE!
HELP ME!
THAD! PLEASE!

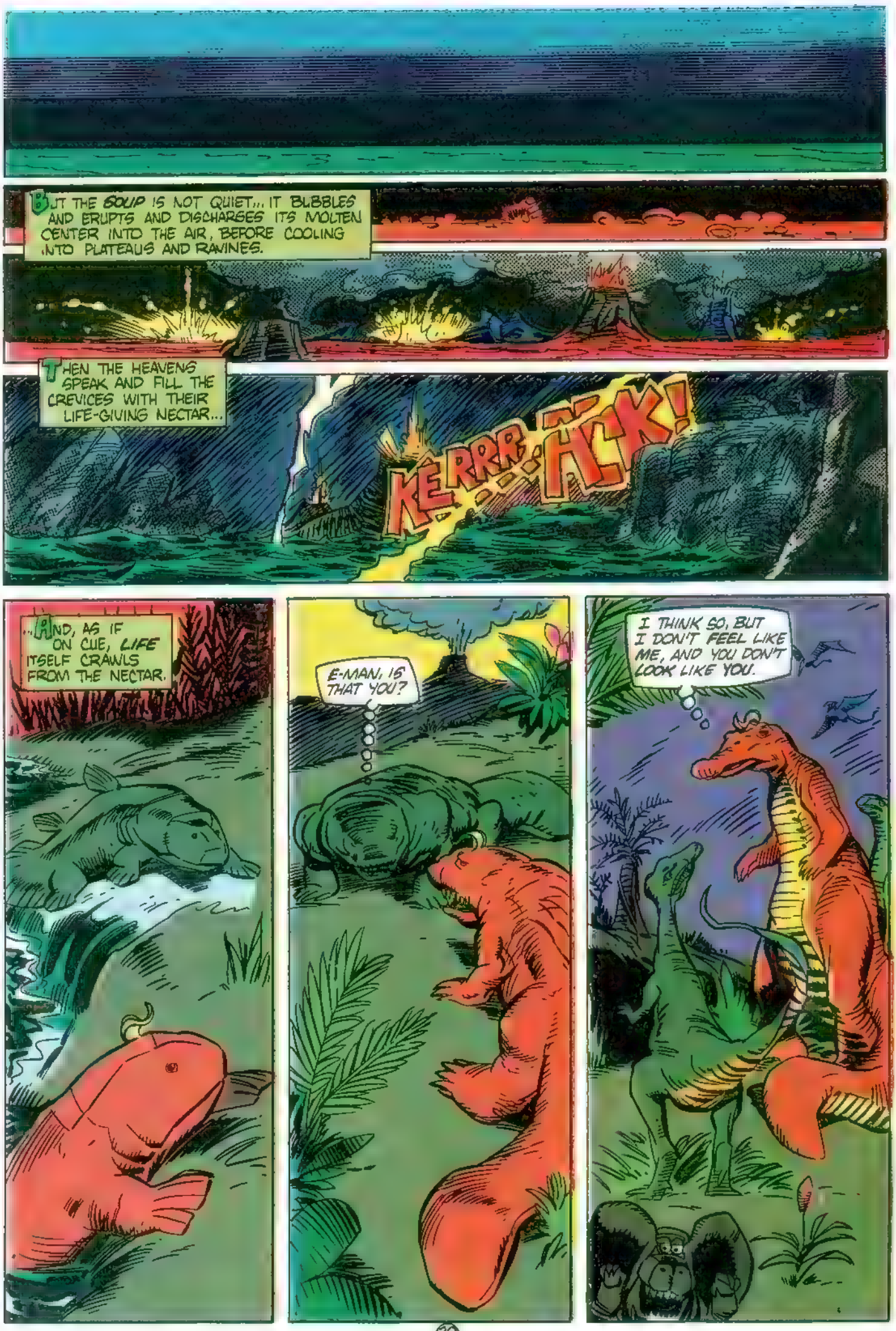
THERE, VIKTORIA, I'VE KEPT MY PROMISE-- THE NEW VIKTORIA!
COME CLOSER AND SEE IF YOU LIKE WHAT I'VE DONE.
I THINK SHE'S GORGEOUS, BUT IS SHE ME?
SHE IS YOU! I'VE SUCCEEDED!
WHAT A WONDERFUL THING YOU'VE CREATED! R.A. CAN DO SO MUCH GOOD.
TRUE. BUT FIRST HE MUST BE PROTECTED.
PROTECTED? FROM WHOM?
Gods and Heroes
A Smithsonian Book of Comic-Book Comics
COMIX: A HISTORY OF COMIC BOOKS
GREAT COMIC BOOK HEROES
TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS QUARK FELLOW.
WELL, HE ADORES SURREALISTIC ART... AND SO DOES HIS SISTER. I'VE NEVER SEEN HER, BUT FROM WHAT HE'S TOLD ME, SHE WAS ONCE A VERY PRETTY GIRL WHO WAS DISFIGURED IN A FIRE. NOW THEY WORK TOGETHER ON COMPUTERS.
SO LISTEN TO THIS: HE ONCE SAID IN A CLASS THAT HE HAD USED HIS COMPUTER TO LOCATE THE REALITY CORE IN ALL THINGS, AND THAT DISCOVERY WOULD ENABLE HIM TO ALTER SOLID OBJECTS. HE WOULD EVEN BE ABLE TO "FIX" HIS SISTER'S DISFIGUREMENT.
DON'T YOU SEE? REALITY CORE IS JUST ANOTHER TERM FOR ESSENCE!

NOVA, WHAT SAY WE PAY MR. QUARK A FRIENDLY VISIT AND ASK HIM A FEW QUESTIONS?
ASK AWAY, E-MAN. HOW ABOUT THIS QUESTION: WHAT DOES A HUNDRED-FOOT-TALL REALITY ARRANGER DO?
UH... ANYTHING HE WANTS TO?
ANA COMP
GRRRRAARR!
BINGO!
ZHUZT!
CUTE LITTLE PARLOR TRICK, QUARK, BUT I WAS HOPING FOR SOMETHING MORE IMPRESSIVE.
SPLASH!
CHICKEN SOUP? YOU'RE TRYING TO IMPRESS ME WITH CHICKEN SOUP?

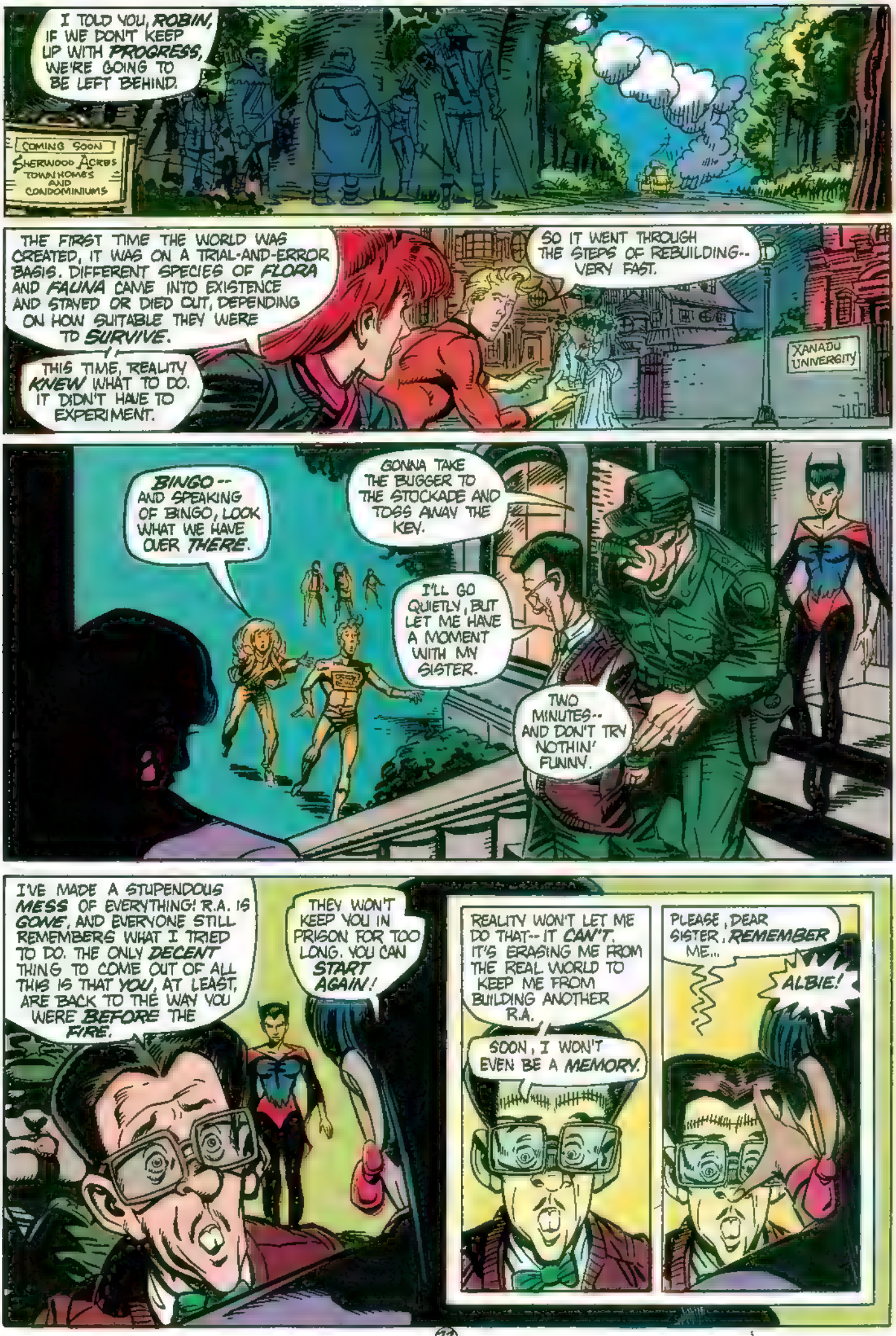
THAT GIZMO ON HIS CHEST IS EITHER THE REALITY ARRANGER OR A LINK TO IT. IF I CAN KNOCK IT OUT BY UNEXPECTEDLY SWITCHING MY ATTACK FROM THE PANTHER TO QUARK, I'LL HAVE CUT QUARK OFF FROM HIS POWER.
GOT TO MAKE THE SWITCH--
--NOW!
NEED SOME ASSISTANCE? TO PARAPHRASE AN EARTHLY EXPRESSION: "TWO BLASTS ARE BETTER THAN NONE." OR IS THAT..."ONE"?
TZZZ!
ZTWANG!
TWO BLASTS EQUAL NONE, BECAUSE YOUR NEGATIVE BLAST HAS NEUTRALIZED MY BLAST. WE'VE JUST CLOBBERED A BULL ELEPHANT WITH A SNOWFLAKE.
CRAWL!
EYOOW!
IF ONLY I HADN'T LOST MY POWERS...!
!
ENOUGH OF THESE PETTY GAMES! THE MOMENT HAS COME TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON YOU OF SUCH MAGNITUDE THAT YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN BOTHER ME.
THE REAL WORLD IS ABOUT TO CHANGE-- FOREVER!


FOR A MOMENT, ALL ARE BRACED, WAITING FOR THE PROMISED CATASTROPHE TO ERUPT... BUT THE STILLNESS REMAINS UNBROKEN.
SO WHERE ARE ALL THE TWISTING TREES AND FACES EMERGING FROM STONES? NOTHING HAS CHANGED!
OH, YES, IT HAS...!
LOOK AT YOURSELF!
I'M TRYING TO... TO HOLD MY... SHAPE.. BUT I CAN'T!
IT'S HAPPENING EVERYWHERE! QUARK-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
I SWEAR TO YOU, E-MAN, I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE. I INTENDED TO TURN THE LOT OF YOU INTO CLOWNS.
I WOULD'VE LIKED THAT BETTER.
E-MAN!
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO, NOVA! I'M HELPLESS!
blip!
!
JUST HOLD ME... I'M NOT AFRAID... I JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOU.
I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING... WHILE I CAN STILL SPEAK... I... I... >y-gluge... >brubble<

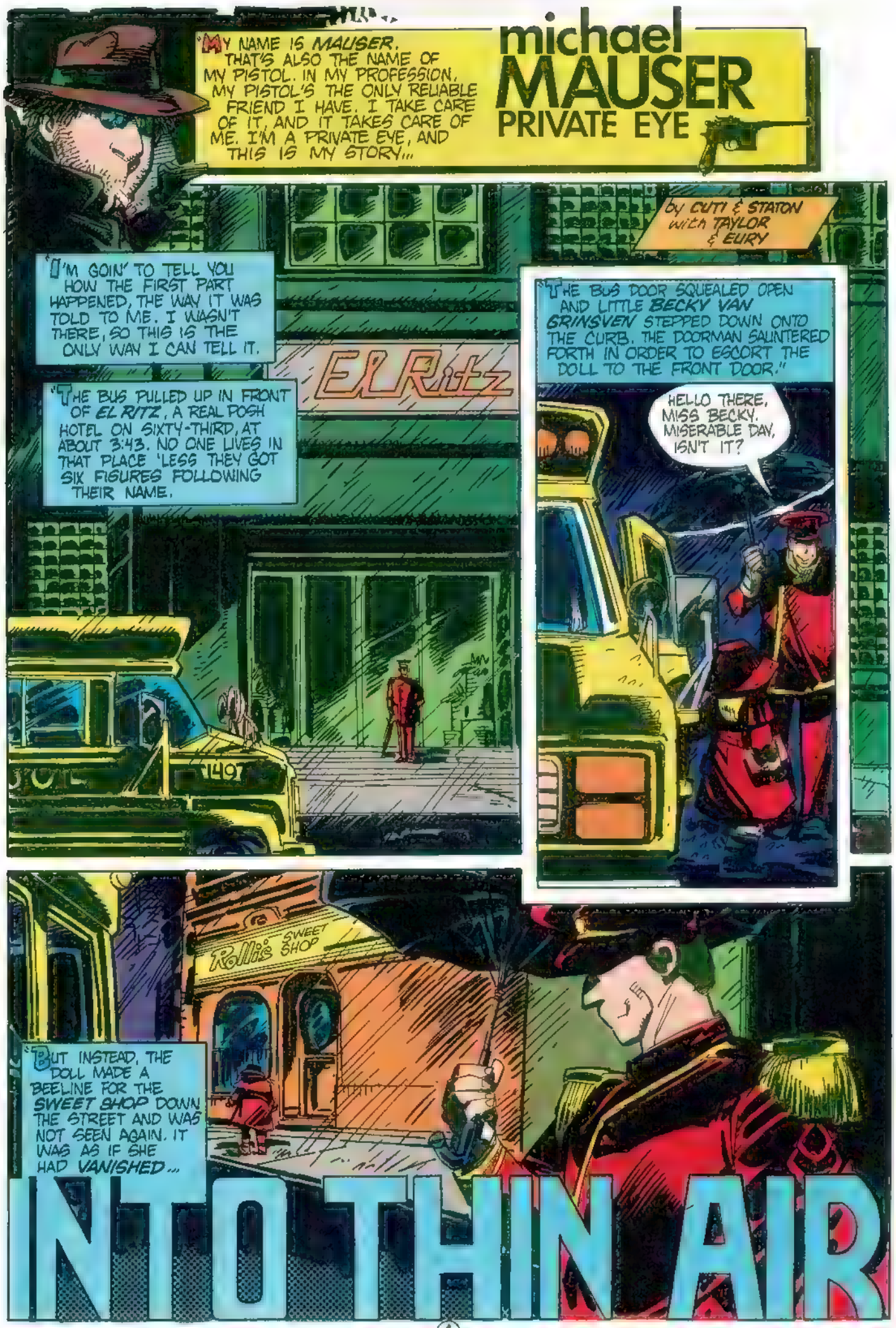
AFTER XANADU II., THE GREAT CITIES OF THE WORLD BEGIN TO FALL-- NEW YORK, PARIS, AND ROME. THE ANCIENT AND THE MODERN DISSOLVE SIDE BY SIDE AT THE SAME RATE. MAMMOTH MONUMENTS MANKIND HAS FASHIONED OVER THE CENTURIES SOFTEN AND THEN MERGE INTO GRUEL.
COPES
EVEN NATURE HAS NOT BEEN SPARED FROM THE TERRIBLE, INVISIBLE FORCE WHICH HAS RUINED ALL THAT HUMANITY HAS WROUGHT. THE LAST THINGS TO DWINDLE INTO SHAPELESS CLAY ARE THE MIGHTY SEQUOIAS. THEY HOLD FAST TO THEIR CONTOURS FOR SEVERAL HOURS, BEFORE THE OVERWHELMING FORCE COMPELS THEM TO DRIP INTO THE PRIMORDIAL SOUP LIKE A LUMP OF ICE CREAM IN THE DESERT.

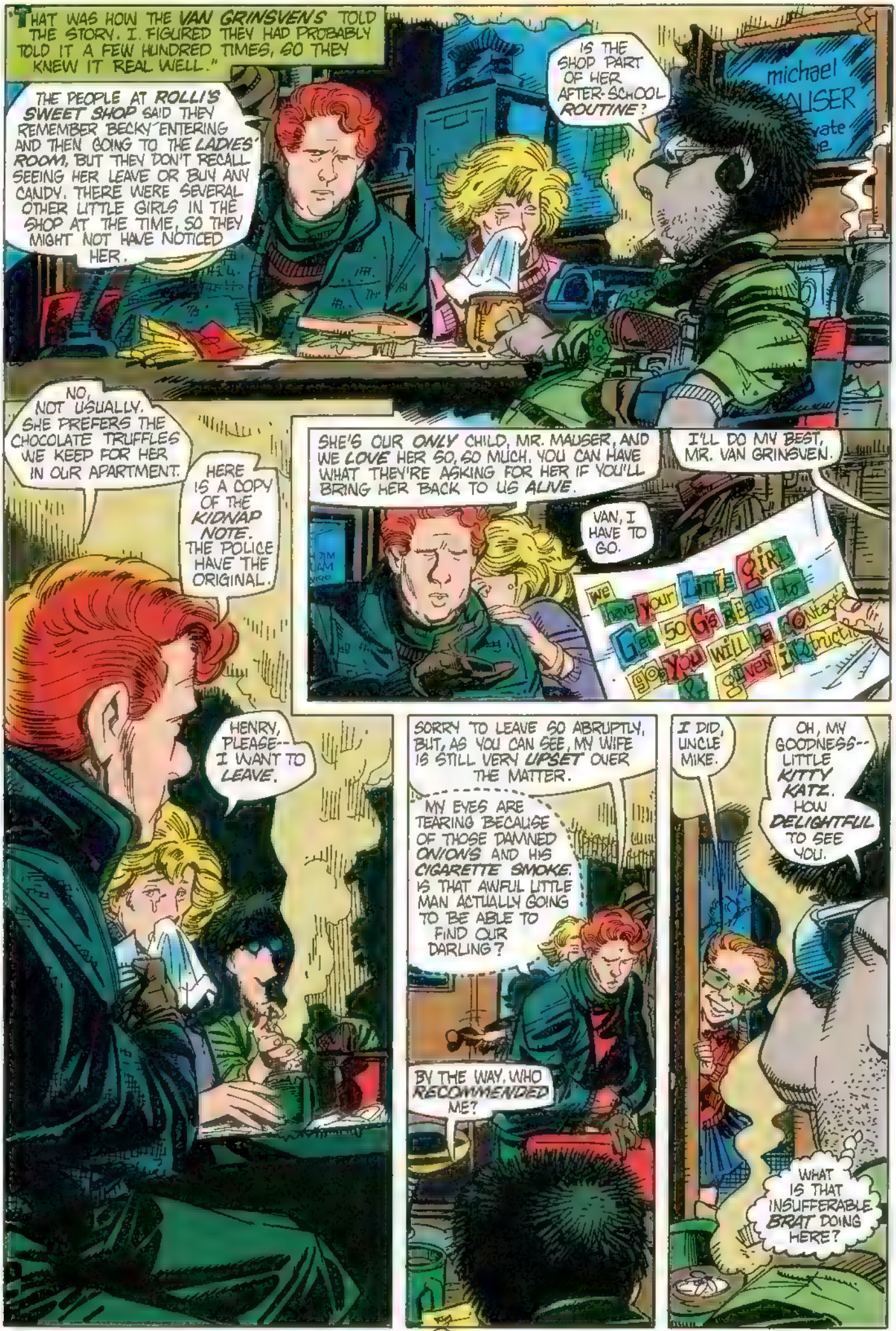

BUT THE SOUP IS NOT QUIET... IT BUBBLES AND ERUPTS AND DISCHARGES ITS MOLTEN CENTER INTO THE AIR, BEFORE COOLING INTO PLATEAUS AND RAVINES.
THEN THE HEAVENS SPEAK AND FILL THE CREVICES WITH THEIR LIFE-GIVING NECTAR...
KERRR-ACK!
...AND, AS IF ON CUE, LIFE ITSELF CRAWLS FROM THE NECTAR.
E-MAN, IS THAT YOU?
I THINK SO, BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE ME, AND YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU.

NOVA, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENING?
WAIT A LITTLE WHILE UNTIL OUR BRAINS GROW A BIT MORE. BY THE TIME WE'RE NEANDERTHALS, I MIGHT HAVE SOME OF IT FIGURED OUT.
AT LEAST WE CAN SPEAK... BUT THIS STILL ISN'T MAKING ANY SENSE TO ME. ARE YOU DOING ANY BETTER?
I THINK SO. QUARK FOOLED WITH REALITY UNTIL HE WENT TOO FAR TOO MANY TIMES. I SUPPOSE REALITY MUST BE LIKE A RUBBER BAND -- YOU CAN STRETCH IT SO FAR... AND THEN IT SNAPS, INSTEAD OF ALLOWING ITSELF TO BE CHANGED OVER AND OVER...
...REALITY WIPED EVERYTHING CLEAN. THE EARTH WENT BACK TO BEING A PRIMORDIAL BALL.
SHE HAS A FINE MIND. SOCRATES SHOULD LISTEN TO HER.
AND NOW WHAT'S GOING ON? IS REALITY REBUILDING ITSELF?
YES, OBVIOUSLY. THE RATE OF ACTIVITY IS ASTOUNDING, BUT I HAVE A THEORY ABOUT THAT -- WANT TO HEAR IT, HONEY?
SURE.
NOW ENTERING SHERWOOD FOREST
STAND AND DELIVER!

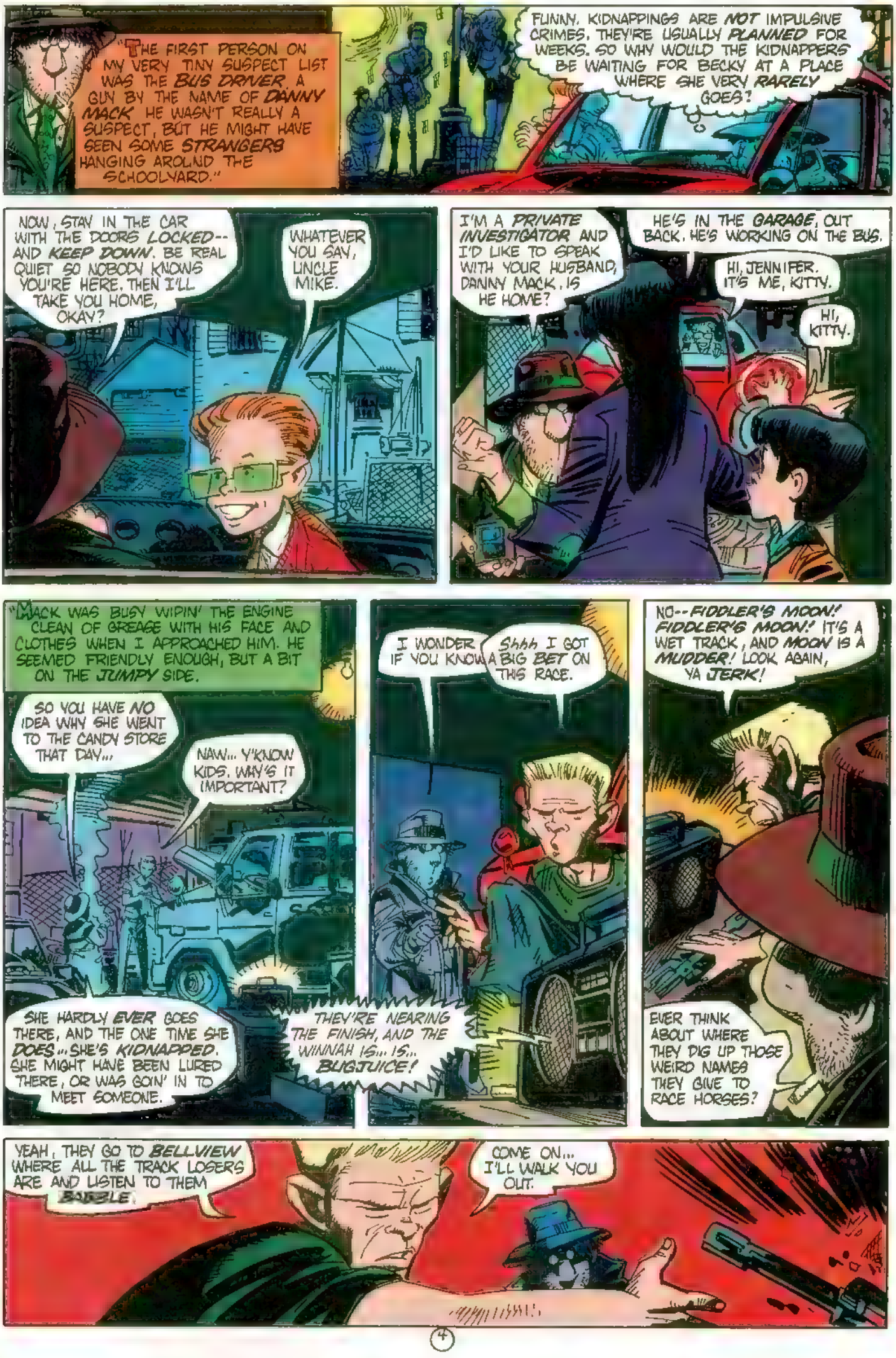

I TOLD YOU, ROBIN, IF WE DON'T KEEP UP WITH PROGRESS, WE'RE GOING TO BE LEFT BEHIND.
COMING SOON SHERWOOD ACRES TOWNHOMES AND CONDOMINIUMS
THE FIRST TIME THE WORLD WAS CREATED, IT WAS ON A TRIAL-AND-ERROR BASIS. DIFFERENT SPECIES OF FLORA AND FAUNA CAME INTO EXISTENCE AND STAYED OR DIED OUT, DEPENDING ON HOW SUITABLE THEY WERE TO SURVIVE.
THIS TIME, REALITY KNEW WHAT TO DO. IT DIDN'T HAVE TO EXPERIMENT.
SO IT WENT THROUGH THE STEPS OF REBUILDING-- VERY FAST.
XANADU UNIVERSITY
BINGO -- AND SPEAKING OF BINGO, LOOK WHAT WE HAVE OVER THERE.
GONNA TAKE THE BUGGER TO THE STOCKADE AND TOSS AWAY THE KEY.
I'LL GO QUIETLY, BUT LET ME HAVE A MOMENT WITH MY SISTER.
TWO MINUTES-- AND DON'T TRY NOTHIN' FUNNY.
I'VE MADE A STUPENDOUS MESS OF EVERYTHING! R.A. IS GONE, AND EVERYONE STILL REMEMBERS WHAT I TRIED TO DO. THE ONLY DECENT THING TO COME OUT OF ALL THIS IS THAT YOU, AT LEAST, ARE BACK TO THE WAY YOU WERE BEFORE THE FIRE.
THEY WON'T KEEP YOU IN PRISON FOR TOO LONG. YOU CAN START AGAIN!
REALITY WON'T LET ME DO THAT-- IT CAN'T. IT'S ERASING ME FROM THE REAL WORLD TO KEEP ME FROM BUILDING ANOTHER R.A.
SOON, I WON'T EVEN BE A MEMORY.
PLEASE, DEAR SISTER, REMEMBER ME...
ALBIE!

MY POOR ALBIE...
I'M SURE HE KNOWS THAT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HIM.
THANK YOU.
YOU'RE VIKTORIA? YOU CERTAINLY AREN'T... WELL, THE WAY I PICTURED YOU...
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, AND I KNOW THAT ALBIE TELLS PEOPLE ABOUT ME BEING AN ARTISTS' MODEL. I ALWAYS DID HAVE A SHAPELY FIGURE, BUT MY FACE ISN'T WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL CLASSIC BEAUTY...
HEY! WHERE ARE YOU TWO GOING?
TO JOE AND NICK'S COFFEE SHOP. I WANT TO ASK E-MAN HOW ONE MIGHT ENROLL IN THIS LOVELY UNIVERSITY.
WHY, YOU LITTLE VIXEN! I SHOULD--
YOOOOWWW!
BZZZT!
WHATTAY'KNOW?! THIS REALITY REARRANGING HAS RESTORED MY POWERS!
NOVA'S BACK IN TOWN!
END


MY NAME IS MAUSER. THAT'S ALSO THE NAME OF MY PISTOL. IN MY PROFESSION, MY PISTOL'S THE ONLY RELIABLE FRIEND I HAVE. I TAKE CARE OF IT, AND IT TAKES CARE OF ME. I'M A PRIVATE EYE, AND THIS IS MY STORY...
michael MAUSER PRIVATE EYE
by CUTI & STATON with TAYLOR & EURY
I'M GOIN' TO TELL YOU HOW THE FIRST PART HAPPENED, THE WAY IT WAS TOLD TO ME. I WASN'T THERE, SO THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN TELL IT.
THE BUS PULLED UP IN FRONT OF EL RITZ, A REAL POSH HOTEL ON SIXTY-THIRD, AT ABOUT 3:43. NO ONE LIVES IN THAT PLACE 'LESS THEY GOT SIX FIGURES FOLLOWING THEIR NAME.
EL Ritz
THE BUS DOOR SQUEALED OPEN AND LITTLE BECKY VAN GRINSVEN STEPPED DOWN ONTO THE CURB. THE DOORMAN SAUNTERED FORTH IN ORDER TO ESCORT THE DOLL TO THE FRONT DOOR."
HELLO THERE, MISS BECKY. MISERABLE DAY, ISN'T IT?
BUT INSTEAD, THE DOLL MADE A BEELINE FOR THE SWEET SHOP DOWN THE STREET AND WAS NOT SEEN AGAIN. IT WAS AS IF SHE HAD VANISHED...
Rollie's SWEET SHOP
INTO THIN AIR


"THAT WAS HOW THE VAN GRINSVEN'S TOLD THE STORY. I FIGURED THEY HAD PROBABLY TOLD IT A FEW HUNDRED TIMES, SO THEY KNEW IT REAL WELL."
THE PEOPLE AT ROLLI'S SWEET SHOP SAID THEY REMEMBER BECKY ENTERING AND THEN GOING TO THE LADIES' ROOM, BUT THEY DON'T RECALL SEEING HER LEAVE OR BUY ANY CANDY. THERE WERE SEVERAL OTHER LITTLE GIRLS IN THE SHOP AT THE TIME, SO THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE NOTICED HER.
IS THE SHOP PART OF HER AFTER-SCHOOL ROUTINE?
michael
NO, NOT USUALLY. SHE PREFERS THE CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES WE KEEP FOR HER IN OUR APARTMENT.
HERE IS A COPY OF THE KIDNAP NOTE. THE POLICE HAVE THE ORIGINAL.
SHE'S OUR ONLY CHILD, MR. MAUSER, AND WE LOVE HER SO, SO MUCH. YOU CAN HAVE WHAT THEY'RE ASKING FOR HER IF YOU'LL BRING HER BACK TO US ALIVE.
I'LL DO MY BEST, MR. VAN GRINSVEN.
VAN, I HAVE TO GO.
We have your Little Girl Get 50 Gs Ready to go You will be Contacted given Instructions
HENRY, PLEASE-- I WANT TO LEAVE.
SORRY TO LEAVE SO ABRUPTLY, BUT, AS YOU CAN SEE, MY WIFE IS STILL VERY UPSET OVER THE MATTER.
MY EYES ARE TEARING BECAUSE OF THOSE DAMNED ONIONS AND HIS CIGARETTE SMOKE. IS THAT AWFUL LITTLE MAN ACTUALLY GOING TO BE ABLE TO FIND OUR DARLING?
BY THE WAY, WHO RECOMMENDED ME?
I DID, UNCLE MIKE.
OH, MY GOODNESS-- LITTLE KITTY KATZ. HOW DELIGHTFUL TO SEE YOU.
WHAT IS THAT INSUFFERABLE BRAT DOING HERE?

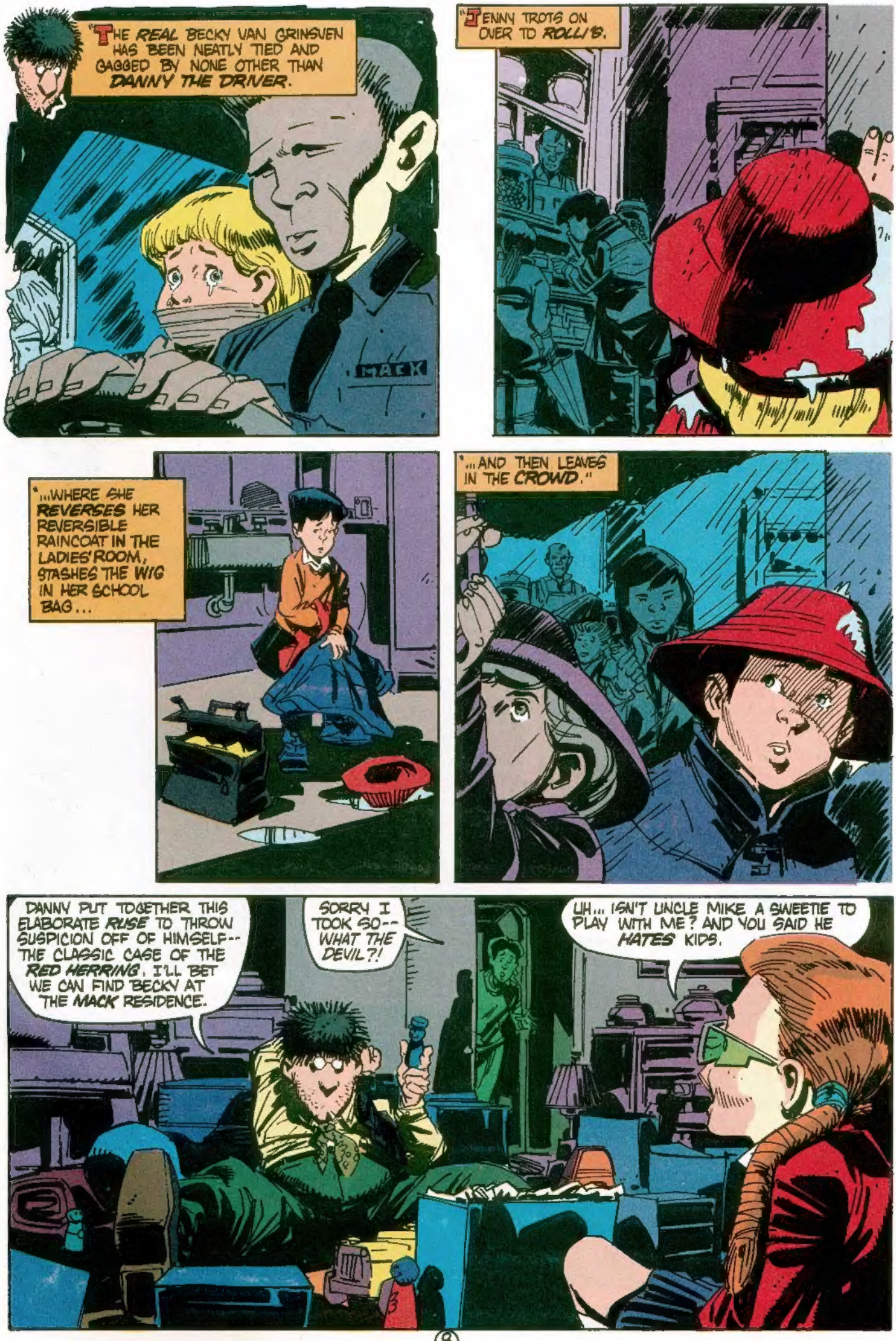
I KNOW YOU'RE NOT REALLY GLAD TO SEE ME, BUT I CAN HELP YOU ON THIS CASE, 'CAUSE I RIDE ON THE SAME BUS AS BECKY VAN GRINSVEN.
HOO, GEEZ! LOOKIT WHAT YOU'RE DOIN'!
MAYBE YOU CAN GIVE ME A FEW NAMES AND ADDRESSES. THAT WOULD BE USEFUL.
IS THAT GUN REALLY LOADED?
KA-POW!
EEEEYAAA!
OOPS! IT IS LOADED!
YOU'RE GOIN' HOME, KIDDO, BEFORE I GET TEMPTED TO TRY OUT MY THEORY ON HOW TO COMMIT THE PERFECT MURDER.
AW, COME ON, UNCLE MIKE. IF SOMEONE SHOT YOU IN YOUR SEAT, AREN'T YOU HAPPY IT WAS THE ONE CONNECTED TO YOUR CHAIR?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FORCE ME TO RIDE THE SUBWAY AT NIGHT, ARE YOU, UNCLE MIKE? THERE ARE TRAMPS AND CHILD MOLESTERS PROWLING THOSE DARK CATACOMBS AT THIS TIME. THE TRANSIT COPS DON'T EVEN PATROL DOWN THERE WITHOUT A VICIOUS POLICE DOG.
CHINESE RESTAURANT
SPECIAL COMBINATION PLATE
GET IN. I CAN'T BE THAT CRUEL--NOT TO THOSE POOR TRAMPS AND CHILD MOLESTERS.

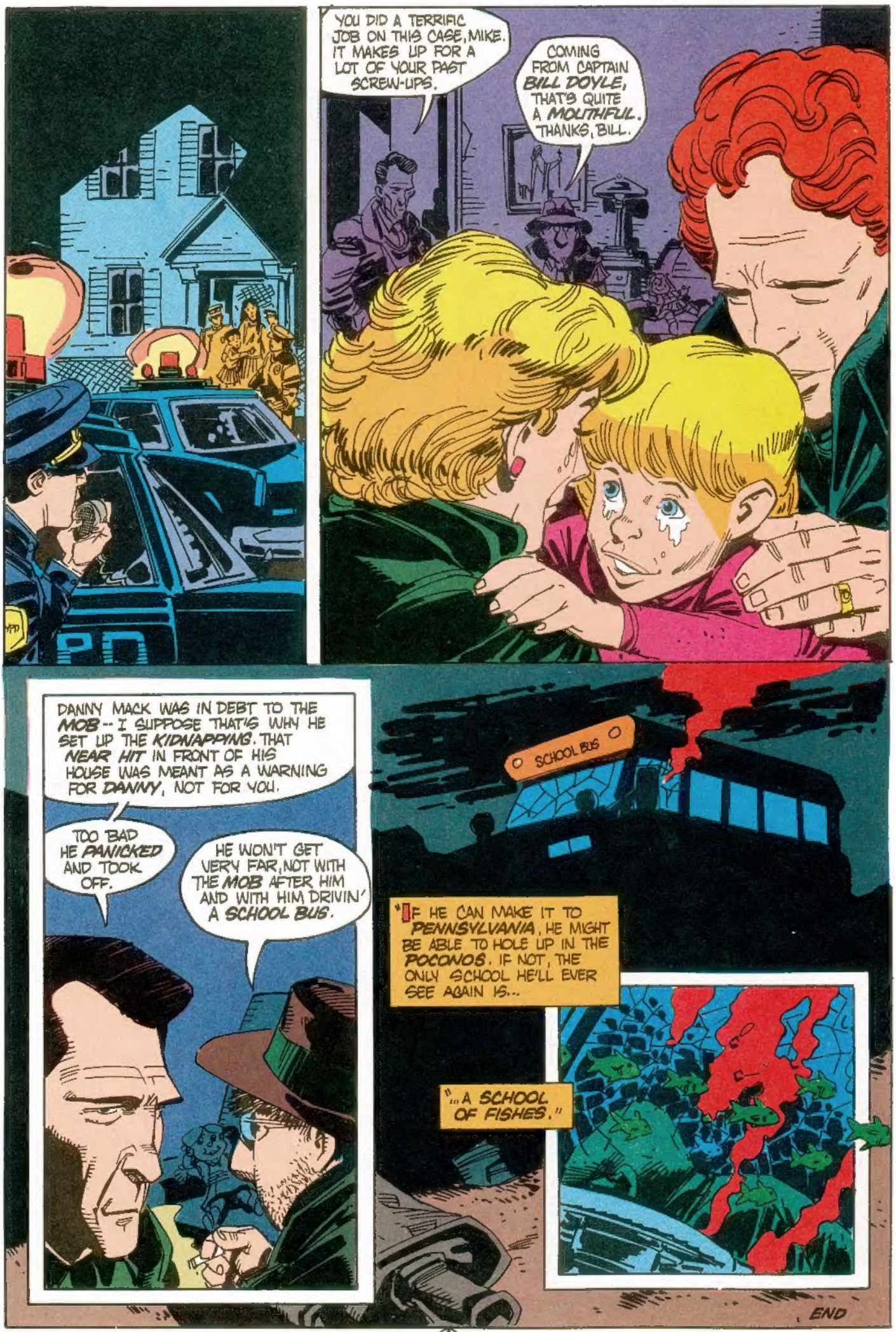

"THE FIRST PERSON ON MY VERY TINY SUSPECT LIST WAS THE BUS DRIVER, A GUY BY THE NAME OF DANNY MACK. HE WASN'T REALLY A SUSPECT, BUT HE MIGHT HAVE SEEN SOME STRANGERS HANGING AROUND THE SCHOOLYARD."
FUNNY. KIDNAPPINGS ARE NOT IMPULSIVE CRIMES. THEY'RE USUALLY PLANNED FOR WEEKS. SO WHY WOULD THE KIDNAPPERS BE WAITING FOR BECKY AT A PLACE WHERE SHE VERY RARELY GOES?
NOW, STAY IN THE CAR WITH THE DOORS LOCKED-- AND KEEP DOWN. BE REAL QUIET SO NOBODY KNOWS YOU'RE HERE. THEN I'LL TAKE YOU HOME, OKAY?
WHATEVER YOU SAY, UNCLE MIKE.
I'M A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR AND I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOUR HUSBAND, DANNY MACK. IS HE HOME?
HE'S IN THE GARAGE, OUT BACK. HE'S WORKING ON THE BUS.
HI, JENNIFER. IT'S ME, KITTY.
HI, KITTY.
"MACK WAS BUSY WIPIN' THE ENGINE CLEAN OF GREASE WITH HIS FACE AND CLOTHES WHEN I APPROACHED HIM. HE SEEMED FRIENDLY ENOUGH, BUT A BIT ON THE JUMPY SIDE.
SO YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHY SHE WENT TO THE CANDY STORE THAT DAY...
NAW... Y'KNOW KIDS. WHY'S IT IMPORTANT?
SHE HARDLY EVER GOES THERE, AND THE ONE TIME SHE DOES.. SHE'S KIDNAPPED. SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN LURED THERE, OR WAS GOIN' IN TO MEET SOMEONE.
I WONDER IF YOU KNOW
SHHH I GOT A BIG BET ON THIS RACE.
THEY'RE NEARING THE FINISH, AND THE WINNAH IS... IS... BUGJUICE!
NO--FIDDLER'S MOON! FIDDLER'S MOON! IT'S A WET TRACK, AND MOON IS A MUDDER! LOOK AGAIN, YA JERK!
EVER THINK ABOUT WHERE THEY DIG UP THOSE WEIRD NAMES THEY GIVE TO RACE HORSES?
YEAH, THEY GO TO BELLVIEW WHERE ALL THE TRACK LOSERS ARE AND LISTEN TO THEM BABBLE.
COME ON... I'LL WALK YOU OUT.

SORRY I WASN'T MUCH HELP, MIKE. SAY, DO YOU LIKE TO PLAY POKER? STUD AND DRAW? I GOT A REAL HEAVY GAME HERE ON SATURDAY.
I'LL PASS.
HE'S REALLY INTO GAMBLING.
BBBBBBBRRRRTTTT!
GET DOWN!
KA-POW!
BBBBRRRT!!!
KA-POW! KA-POW!
KITTY-- SHE'S IN THERE!
SHE'S ONE DEAD CAT NOW. THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR LEAVIN' YOUR PETS IN YOUR CAR.
9MM
DANNY! DANNY! YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE, FINE.
DADDY!
WHAT AM I GOIN' TO TELL MY SISTER?
WHAT'S THE EXCITEMENT? I WAS IN THE HOUSE WITH JENNY. ANYBODY GET SHOT? IS THERE BLOOD?
WHY DOES SHE DO THIS TO ME WHEN I HAVE A LOADED GUN IN MY HAND?

"I HAD A FEW OTHER CALLS TO MAKE, BUT I KNEW I'D BE WISE TO GET THE KID OFF MY TAIL BEFORE SHE GOT HURT. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'D FALLEN INTO, BUT THE MOB DOESN'T SEND OUT HAMMER MEN FOR CASUAL WARNINGS--THINGS WERE HOT AND BUBBLIN' TOWARD A BOIL!"
MIKE! KITTY! WHERE HAVE YOU GUYS BEEN? I'VE BEEN CALLING ALL OVER TOWN.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE WORRIED, SIS. WHEN KITTY'S WITH ME, SHE'S AS SAFE AS A GOLDFISH IN A BOWL.
I HATE LYIN' TO MY OWN KIN.
SIT DOWN, MIKE. THAT'S THE BABY, WALDO. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
WAAAAHH!!
HONESTLY... WILL YOU LOOK AT THIS JUMBLE! AND I'VE GOT TO PICK IT ALL UP!
WE ALL HAVE OUR CROSSES TO BEAR, KID.
SCHOOL
BUS
HOLD ON A SEC, KITTY. THAT TOY BUS JUST GAVE ME AN IDEA. HOW'D YOU LIKE TO DO SOME SLEUTHIN' WITH ME?
ONLY IF IT DOESN'T INVOLVE HOT LEAD.
GET SOME BOXES OUT OF THE KITCHEN--YOU KNOW, CEREAL BOXES AND STUFF.
THIS IS THE CITY THE BOX OF SWEET AND SOUR TOASTIE OATS IS THE SCHOOL, AND THE BOX OF CHEESY RIGATONI IS THE HOTEL, AND THE SMALL BOX OF DOGGIE YUMS IS THE CANDY STORE.
SAY-- YOU DON'T HAVE A DOG.
LITTLE WALDO EATS THEM. THEY'RE GOOD FOR HIS TEETH.
BUS STOP ONE IS--
JOHN ARRANGO. WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, UNCLE MIKE?
'CAUSE I GOT A GUT FEELIN' THE ANSWER TO TO THIS CRIME IS IN THE BREAK IN BECKY'S ROUTINE, AND FIRSTLY, I GOT TO LEARN HER ROUTINE.
SCHOOL
Cheesie Rigatoni
SCHOOL
Skoop
SCH

AND THE LAST STOP IS BECKY VAN GRINSVEN.
CHEESIE RIGATONI
THERE'S STILL ONE KID LEFT IN THE BUS. I THOUGHT BECKY WAS THE LAST STOP.
SHE IS. THAT'S JENNIFER MACK, THE BUS DRIVER'S DAUGHTER. THEY RIDE HOME TOGETHER.
BY GEORGE, I THINK I'VE GOT IT!
GOT WHAT?
THE MEASLES! NO, THE ANSWER TO THIS CASE, DUMMY.
SCHOOL
"KITTY, SEE IF THIS SCENARIO HAS ANY HOLES IN IT: BECKY GETS OFF THE BUS IN FRONT OF THE RITZ, BUT THE ONLY REASON THE DOORMAN THINKS IT'S BECKY IS BECAUSE THE GIRL IS WEARIN' BECKY'S RAINCOAT AND HAS BLONDE HAIR.
"THE GIRL, HOWEVER, IS ACTUALLY JENNY MACK IN A BLONDE WIG.


"THE REAL BECKY VAN GRINSVEN HAS BEEN NEATLY TIED AND GAGGED BY NONE OTHER THAN DANNY THE DRIVER.
MACK
"JENNY TROTS ON OVER TO ROLLI'S.
"...WHERE SHE REVERSES HER REVERSIBLE RAINCOAT IN THE LADIES' ROOM, STASHES THE WIG IN HER SCHOOL BAG...
"...AND THEN LEAVES IN THE CROWD."
DANNY PUT TOGETHER THIS ELABORATE RUSE TO THROW SUSPICION OFF OF HIMSELF-- THE CLASSIC CASE OF THE RED HERRING. I'LL BET WE CAN FIND BECKY AT THE MACK RESIDENCE.
SORRY I TOOK SO-- WHAT THE DEVIL?!
UH... ISN'T UNCLE MIKE A SWEETIE TO PLAY WITH ME? AND YOU SAID HE HATES KIDS.


YOU DID A TERRIFIC JOB ON THIS CASE, MIKE. IT MAKES UP FOR A LOT OF YOUR PAST SCREW-UPS.
COMING FROM CAPTAIN BILL DOYLE, THAT'S QUITE A MOUTHFUL. THANKS, BILL.
DANNY MACK WAS IN DEBT TO THE MOB -- I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHY HE SET UP THE KIDNAPPING. THAT NEAR HIT IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE WAS MEANT AS A WARNING FOR DANNY, NOT FOR YOU.
TOO BAD HE PANICKED AND TOOK OFF.
HE WON'T GET VERY FAR, NOT WITH THE MOB AFTER HIM AND WITH HIM DRIVIN' A SCHOOL BUS.
SCHOOL BUS
"IF HE CAN MAKE IT TO PENNSYLVANIA, HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HOLE UP IN THE POCONOS. IF NOT, THE ONLY SCHOOL HE'LL EVER SEE AGAIN IS..."
"...A SCHOOL OF FISHES."
END

THE E-MAN STORY

I had been assistant editor at Charlton for less than a year when my boss, Charlton editor George Wildman, came back from a meeting with the publishers and said to me, "Nick, I talked them into trying out a line of super-heroes again, so see if you can come up with some ideas." This was great news. Both George and I knew that if we were going to get Charlton's ho-hum line of comics rocking and rolling again, it would take super-heroes to do it.

I immediately thought of Joe Staton. I had only known Joe for a couple of months, but we had gotten along very well. He was the only guy I knew who was even more shy and softer-spoken than my former boss, the late Wally Wood. I especially liked Joe's comic art style on the now-defunct *Primus*, and started racking my brain to come up with the right hero for his unique talents. After only a little racking, I thought of Jack Cole's *Plastic Man*. As a kid, I was crazy about this offbeat character, but I didn't want just a copy of Plas. I wanted to take him further. Ergo, using Einstein's classic formula — E=mc2 — I came up with a shape-changing energy being. (The "E" in the equation stands for Energy, and the "m" stands for Mass or Matter.)

Thrilled with myself, I called Joe and pieced together an origin story while I spoke to him. I decided E-Man would be a factory worker who became the Energy-Man due to an explosion. Joe hated the origin. Back to the racking.

A book on outer space I had been reading at the time called *Challenge of the Stars* talked about a "nova," or star eruption. And so, E-Man's origin was born.

Next, Joe and I discussed E-Man's appearance. Specifically, I asked him to design a chest emblem using the "E=mc2" equation. The only other thing I mentioned was "Puleeeze, NO cape!" When Joe sent in the first black-and-white drawing of E-Man, I covered it with a sheet of vellum and colored it. I purposely stayed away from red and blue, since there were at least two other popular heroes who used that color combo. Their names escape me.

E-Man hit the streets with a resounding . . . THUD. It sold fair at first, but eventually did worse than Charlton's westerns. The only reasons *E-Man* went as far as ten issues (instead of being killed off after issue three) were because the publishers felt sorry for their assistant editor and, for some unexplained reason, it was our top seller in subscriptions. However, at that time street sales were all that counted. Eventually, the street sales became so poor even I wanted to put the unfortunate guy out of his misery.

Take it away, Joe.

—Nick Cuti

WHO'S ON FIRST

Charlton's run of *E-Man* came to an end in 1974; over the years, I attempted to purchase the rights to continue the character, but to no avail. When I was hired as art director by First Comics in 1982, First bought the *E-Man* rights from Charlton and I repaid all of First's expenses by deductions from my page rate.

Unfortunately, Nick was not available to write the book. Even more unfortunately, *E-Man* was saddled with an editor at First who was convinced that *E-Man* was a parody book and that "there's no reason to do a parody unless you hurt somebody." So, for eight issues, *E-Man* struggled along under the weight of heavy-handed put-downs and unintelligible in-group jokes.

Finally, that editor was removed from the book and, along with Rick Oliver (who co-wrote and edited *E-Man* beginning with issue #9), I attempted to salvage some trace of the original, easy-going E-Man. But by then, the damage had been done, and when Nick became available again, he wrote only two issues before the book was cancelled with issue #25.

First allowed the character to become inactive, and eventually the rights to create new stories reverted to me. Comico was interested in giving *E-Man* another try. So here we are, Nick and me, with the old E-Man we know and love, without an intrusive "editorial direction," taking our guy around the block again, to see if anybody is still interested.

—Joe Staton

Are you interested in seeing *E-Man* return to the stands in an all-new, regular series? Sales on this one-shot you've just bought will make the ultimate decision about E-Man's future (so tell your friends to try *E-Man!*), but your letters will certainly help, too. Write to *E-Man*, c/o Comico the Comic Company, 1547 DeKalb Street, Norristown, PA 19401. And a tip of the editorial cap to Joe and Nick for giving me the chance to work on an old favorite.

—Michael Eury